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ANNALS OF OXFORD.

VOL. I.

ANNALS OF OXFORD.

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BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ANNALS OF OXFORD.

CHAPTER I.

THE CROSS KEYS.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE had not yet risen to the dignity of a whining schoolboy, with satchel and shining face, creeping like snail unwillingly to school. It had never occurred to him to hope that he might one day become as great a man as his father, and rise to be Alderman of Stratford. He was still only an infant, mewling and puking in his nurse's arms, when Oxford and Cambridge fell to quarrelling on the absurdest of all the absurd questions about which it was possible for them to lose their tempers, and rouse the laughter of bystanders.

It was an age of new devices and daring experiments; a period in which the leaders of our national opinion delighted in snapping the trammels of en-

feebled tradition, and substituting novel truth for antique falsehood. In every direction, and amongst every class of men, the prevailing tendency was to mistrust the old and extol the new. England had broken away from Rome, and was vexing her brain with scores of nice theological questions that were of recent origin or recent resurrection; and, in every department of heroic endeavour and intellectual activity, her strongest and brightest sons were bent on improving upon the ways of their forefathers, and surpassing the folk of former time, when the two great seats of national learning, arguing as though to be old were of a necessity to be venerable, and acting as though senility were the fittest object of human ambition, began to squabble about their respective claims to honour on the score of antiquity.

The dispute itself was almost as ancient as the younger of the two institutions that now revived it, together with all the paltry passions and pedantic lies which the controversy had generated in the course of centuries. The Oxonians and Cantabs of the strictly feudal period were continually exchanging insults in Latin, and fabricating impudent statements about the comparative oldness or newness of their rival academies. To the Oxonian, who boasted an academic descent from Alfred the Great, the Cantab retorted by extolling the munificence with

which King Sigebert fostered letters on the banks of the Cam during a temporary depression of his royal fortunes. Whereto the irritated Oxonian, instead of deriding the claims of Sigebertus to a place on the roll of splendid literary patrons, in most cases replied by showing that, though Alfred achieved great things for learning at Oxford, it was not to be supposed that the Saxon monarch was the original founder of the university which enjoyed his affectionate patronage, or anything grander than the renovator and generous benefactor of certain schools which had flourished at Oxford generations before Cæsar condescended to conquer the ancient Britons. Bent on not being vanquished in this race into the past, the man of Cambridge would respond with an exasperating assumption of coolness that, though the ancient Britons were doubtless a people of respectable oldness, they were not everybody, and that it was beyond Oxford's power to name a single British king, prince, or chief, who had done for her schools so much as was achieved for Cambridge by the Spanish monarch Cantaber, who, during a period of compulsory absence from his revolutionary subjects, generously restored and enlarged those abodes of philosophy, which, it was almost needless to remark, had been planted in Cambridge long before the birth of Christ. Whereupon, falling back on the fictions of the *Historiola*, a miserable little paragraph, com-

piled by some scholastic boaster, somewhere about the fourteenth century, the Oxford disputant would speak of Cantaber's worth as measurable by any casual specimen of the cheap fruit of the fig-tree, and would ask who the Spaniard was that he could endure to be compared against the heroic Brute, who, together with his warlike Trojans, planted on our island (eleven hundred and eight years before Christ) the college of Greek philosophers, who taught grammar and wisdom at Greeklade, until they migrated to Bellositum, which had been a glorious university for centuries upon centuries ere the Saxons rechristened it Oxenford. Not unmindful that an old date was quite as easily assumed as a comparatively recent one, the Cambridge men, no less than the Oxonians, deemed themselves at liberty to select for the imaginary establishment of their university any time subsequent to the flood,—on creation's side of which event it would of course have been impious to fix the foundation of a thing that had not perished. There is historic authority, or rather, let us say, historian's authority, for the rather startling assertion, that Cambridge University was planted within two hundred years of the Deluge. 'Cœpit Cantabrigia,' Antiquarius wrote to Mr. Orator Masters, in an early year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, 'anno mundi 4321 ex nigro codice universitatis, in quo multa habes de origine Canta-

brigiensis Academiæ. Ex aliis tamen libris vetustis, quos vidi, anno mundi 1829, et anno 3377, et 4095, et 3588, cœpisse intellexi.'

To return,—when little William Shakespeare was a creature of no great importance to any one in Stratford or elsewhere, with the exception of the woman whose maiden name was Mary Arden, this foolish contention broke out once again with a violence which is sometimes seen to distinguish the periodic exacerbations of moral distempers that have almost worn themselves out.

The row happened in this way.

Queen Elizabeth was a young sovereign; and one at least of her principal institutions was by no means old, when she found herself sitting on her mettlesome horse, and surrounded by a brilliant array of courtiers and military attendants, whilst she listened to an oration on her great virtues and the scholastic excellence of Cambridge, which William Masters, the University orator, delivered in the open air, and in the hearing of a dense multitude of scholarly persons. Her Majesty had a strong taste for public receptions and ceremonial processions. Rather than receive no one, she would—had it been her lot to live in these days—have insisted on receiving petitioners against the malt-tax and the compound householder. She liked to exercise her musical voice, and display at the same time her

learning and eloquence, in responding graciously to the addresses of her loyal people. If, on a gala day, she had found occasion to make a series of orations, in which she displayed successively her knowledge of Greek, Latin, and French, she went to rest thoroughly contented with her performances. Hence, on entering (August 5, 1564) the university, which had Orator Masters for its official spokesman, she was engaged on business which disposed her to be more than ordinarily amiable. It was her custom to smile on the multitudes that flocked to cheer her on public occasions; and having journeyed to Cambridge with the beneficent and politic purpose of affording encouragement to the students and orderly divines of an ancient university, she was especially desirous to win the approval of her entertainers. Had William Masters been a less competent mouthpiece of a learned corporation, she would have listened to him with patience and a well-bred air of satisfaction, knowing that her time for speaking would soon come, and that by evincing critical approval of the university's Latin address, she would put the university in the best possible humour to applaud her Latin reply.

Nor was William Masters a speaker that stood in need of his sovereign's forbearance and courtesy. A man of fine presence and voice, no less masterful in nature and aspect than in name and academic stand-

ing, he was highly qualified for the ceremonial duties of his office; and the Queen had no sooner reined her steed backwards, and looked at the speaker, standing on the elevation of the entrance to a college chapel, than she knew him to be no mere collegiate bookworm. At a period when the mediæval habit of travelling had been relinquished to a great extent by his countrymen, William Masters had travelled in France and Italy, and could converse in the tongues of those countries as gracefully and fluently as in the language of ancient Rome; and the man's air and tone, according with his culture and favourable experiences, proclaimed that, notwithstanding the abundance and exactness of his erudition, he was less a scholar of the cloisters than a student of the world.

By smiles and movements of her hands,—benignant demonstrations of which Elizabeth, conscious of her smile's power and her hand's delicacy, was commendably profuse,—the Queen testified her approval of the orator, and intimated her concurrence in the bursts of applause that rent the air, when—acting from malice prepense, or carried away by excitement into 'taller talk' than the occasion required or prudence warranted—William Masters informed his 'excellentissima princeps' that all historians who touched on the matter, concurred in showing that Oxford, if not a mere mushroom in comparison with

Cambridge, was much less ancient than the university which she was glorifying with her presence :—'Sed sive ad hunc, sive ad illum authorem referatur, illud constet inter omnes, Oxoniensi Academia nostram multis esse annis antiquiorem."

When Elizabeth, keenly relishing the acclamations which aided the course of her eloquence by checking it, replied to the address, she stimulated the enthusiasm of the scholars by applauding their official talker, and declaring her concurrence with all that had fallen from his lips; and after 'excellentissima princeps' had passed onwards, the undergraduates and multitude of humble scholars dispersed in the gayest of good humours to their respective halls, where strong beer and sack were served out to them liberally in celebration of the sovereign's presence in their university. With noisy mirth they drank long life to her highness; and having grown weary of extolling the Queen, who was strong enough to be her own pope, the students congratulated themselves on the pluck and thoroughness with which their orator had spoken up for Cambridge, and stated precisely the historic truth respecting her antiquity.

It may be that Orator Masters, speaking under the stimulus of applause, and carried away by delight at his own success, gave the reins to his tongue without taking any more thought for the

probable effect of his utterances on sensitive Oxonians than Mr. Disraeli took for the feelings of his supporters, when, in his famous Edinburgh speech, he mentioned with comic earnestness the pains it had cost him to educate his party to adopt new views. But I am disposed to impute deliberate malice to the subtle talker, and to think that he meant his words to occasion all the ferment and fury to which they gave risè on the banks of the Isis, and in the household of almost every married Oxonian, morbidly jealous for the honour of his university.

If I am right in this estimate of the orator's motives he soon had abundant cause to congratulate himself on the success of his assertions, which were speedily conveyed to every quarter of the kingdom on the dispersion of the multitude that had received them with riotous delight. Before the rise and general diffusion of newspapers, our ancestors, habitually relying on oral intelligencers for their information about current events, were influenced by rumour and gossip to an extent which it is difficult for Victorian Englishmen to imagine. A statement made by an official speaker, and noised abroad by trustworthy reporters, had, upon the public opinion of Old England, all the effect that now-a-days follows from a powerful article, or report of an important speech, disseminated by a newspaper

of large circulation. The system of diffusing news by word of mouth was, moreover, attended with annoyance and injury, of which we know comparatively little, in these days of rival journals, ever on the alert to correct the errors, and counteract the unjust declarations, of their competitors. Under any circumstances Orator Masters's derisive mention of Oxford's newness would have occasioned irritation to thin-skinned Oxonians, aware that, proceeding from the lips of an eminent scholar and academic chief, it would prejudicially affect men's estimate of the university, until it should be no less authoritatively contradicted. But the insult was peculiarly galling to them, on account of the impossibility of making without delay an adequate refutation of its mis-statements. Having no journals in which to publish a counterblast to the Cambridge calumniator, the Oxonians were constrained to nurse their wrath in silence against the arrival of a day favourable to their exercise of the right of reply.

A suitable occasion for the exercise of that right occurred in September 1566, a little more than two years after the delivery of the Cambridge oration, when Elizabeth, in her queenly solicitude for the interests of learning and true religion, irradiated Oxford with her presence. The opportunity had come; and all Oxonians concurred in thinking that Thomas Key (scholastically spelt 'Caius') was the

man to make the most of it in their university's behalf. A gentleman, whose not faultless latinity was highly approved by his Oxford contemporaries, Thomas Key had in former time been chosen to be University Registrar, in consideration of his oratorical and literary faculties, 'for in his time, and long before,' as Antony à Wood informs us, 'it was commonly the Registrarie's office to speech it before, and with epistles (as the orator doth now) to great personages.' That he had been removed from this honourable post was in no respect due to any failure of his special endowments, but to his official negligence, arising out of a moral infirmity, to which an allusion is made in the biography that describes him as 'being besotted with a certain crime, which he could not avoid till old age cured it.' After his removal from the Registrar's place, this master of Latin prose was made a prebendary of Sarum, and raised to govern University College, the house that was formerly credited with the honour of having been founded by the great Alfred. As a consummate artist in Latin phrases, and the chief of Alfred's royal college, Thomas Key (scholastically spelt 'Caius') was called upon to take pen in hand, and deprive Orator Masters of peace of mind for the rest of his days.

The Master of University College—a man obviously disposed to think highly of his own parts—

accepted the invitation without misgiving, and did his utmost to justify his friends' choice: but the historian's obligations compel me to say that his endeavours were not perfectly successful. In seven days he produced a turgid and insolent little pamphlet, the opening sentence * of which asserts that Alfred founded University College, but intimates that the Prince was no more than the restorer of the university. The shortness of the time consumed in the composition of this essay is mentioned by Antony à Wood as a remarkable illustration of the writer's literary aptitude and quickness; but to *litterateurs* of the present epoch the production of thirty-five loosely-printed pages of Latin prose in seven days does not appear an achievement to be wondered at. The majority of the undergraduates now resident at Oxford could easily surpass Thomas Key's performance, both in speed and quality of workmanship; and the Victorian scholar who, on undertaking to write a Latin

* 'Collegium Universitatis, quod primum magna universitatis aula appellabatur; ab optimo pariter et doctissimo principe Alphredo, qui et Aluredus dicitur, ex quatuor Ethelwolphi Vicisaxonum Regis filiis natu minimo, Vanatingi in Bercheriensi provincia nato, circa annum Domini 873, primo, vel secundo ad summum post initum ab eo principatum, anno fundatum esse constat, quo videlicet tempore in Academiæ nostræ instaurationem, quam bona scriptorum pars *fundationem* vocat, totis viribus incumbebat.'—Vide *Assertio Antiquitatis Oxoniensis Academiæ.*

essay, should produce an article as ineffectual and faulty as the Elizabethan master's demonstration of Oxford's antiquity, would not win the respect of any numerous body of classical students.

That Thomas Key's 'Assertio Antiquitatis Oxoniensis Academiæ' appeared a creditable performance to his contemporaries is one of the several facts which show to how low a level scholarship had fallen at Oxford before the opening of Elizabeth's reign. The work of an angry pedant, it is surcharged with the pompous insolence of a pedagogue scolding a group of terrified children. Instead of questioning the accuracy and discretion of Leland, the Cambridge orator should have substantiated his own rash assertions by producing at least one of those witnesses of whom he talked so grandly. The orator of Cambridge imagined that Oxford men were birds, tiny birds, to be scared by shadows and scarecrows. But the orator would find out his mistake, if he ventured to defend his egregious blunders. For Oxonians were no timorous birds, but lions* rather, who would repay with terrible

* 'Imo vero (ut ingenue quod sentio dicam) arbitror, Oratorem ipsum tum existimationi, tum causæ suæ, melius consulturum fuisse, si omissa, quam in Leylandum instituerat, accusatione, vel unico saltem ex tam multis approbatæ fidei testibus, quos pro se facere asseverat, assertionem suam confirmasset. Sed quando id non facit, sed ad ea potius digreditur, quæ ad institutum minus pertinent, quid aliud hîc suspicari possumus, quam quod nos in-

vengeance the insults put upon them. In this strain Thomas Key fumed, and foamed, and rated his adversary; and when the champion of Oxford's antiquity had stated his case thus injudiciously, he published his argument in the form of a miserable little pamphlet, abounding in clerical and printer's errors, and lacking a title.

For a time the Oxonians were well pleased with their defender's Assertion, a printed copy of which her highness the Queen had been graciously pleased to accept, whilst other printed copies of the work had been prepared for circulation throughout the kingdom. The Cambridge orator had been answered, refuted, nailed against the gate of Fame's temple, an object for perpetual derision. The Cantabs were ruffled alike at the universities and in the cathedral closes; it was thought that Orator Masters and his abettors had received sharp punishment. Oxford was jubilant.

But, fortunately for the Cantabs and untowardly for the Master of University College, it happened that if Oxford could boast a Thomas Key (spelt

anibus tantum verborum terriculamentis a veri defensione deterrere conetur? avium fortassis similes existimans, quæ umbras et stramentitias hominum figuras reformidare solent. Ut si errorem illum suum defendere perget, videat, ne Leones experiatur, quos nunc, ut meticulosas aves et aviculas, contemnit.'—Vide *Assertio Antiquitatis Oxoniensis Academiæ.*

learnedly 'Caius'), Cambridge numbered amongst her representative men a John Key (also spelt learnedly 'Caius'). Whilst Thomas ruled his Oxford house, John governed the Cambridge College which he enriched with his wealth and illustrated with his name. Biography does not inform us that they were near relatives; but whilst the proximity of the counties, Lincolnshire and Norfolk, which gave them birth, favours the supposition that Thomas of Lincolnshire and John of Norwich were of the same familiar stock, the bitterness with which they quarrelled justifies a suspicion that they were brothers. Like Thomas of Oxford, the Cambridge Key was a man of letters and a notable author; and in addition to his literary distinctions, he possessed the repute of being a man of science, a learned physician, and one of the wittiest talkers of his day. In Elizabethan England it would have been difficult to find a more brilliant and accomplished gentleman than the court physician and Cambridge don whose memory is perpetuated in Caius College. With tongue and pen he could hold his own against the best talkers and writers of the clerical order. As President of the College of Physicians, and a practitioner who had successively officiated as physician to Edward the Sixth, Mary, and Elizabeth, he was the chief of the medical profession. Affluent in purse, he was also rich in friends; and whilst

epigram and persiflage flowed from his lips in a continual stream, he was justly extolled for kindliness and courteous dignity of manner. Not that he was faultless. He was an excellent gentleman, and—as Thackeray remarked of the British matron, to her enduring displeasure—he knew it. The man who designed his own tomb and monument, which have for their modest inscription the words, 'Vivit post Funera Virtus, Fui Caius,' must have been sufficiently conscious that Dr. John Key was a personage altogether out of the common way in respect of moral excellence.

It was an evil day for Thomas Key, of University College, Oxford, when Dr. John Key, of Cambridge, took up his pen in Orator Masters's behalf, and answered the answerer in a work dear to remote generations of Cambridge men, and entitled, 'De Antiquitate Cantabrigiensis Academiæ Libri Duo. In quorum secundo De Oxoniensis quoque Gymnasii Antiquitate Disseritur. Et Cantabrigiense longe eo antiquius esse definitur. Londinensi Authore.' In historical insight and demonstration, Dr. John Key's work is not more valuable than the performance which evoked it; but in style, humour, pungency, the Cambridge physician's treatise contrasts favourably against the Oxford pamphlet. If the foolish contention did no other good, we may be thankful to it for giving us in the 'De Antiquitate' a charac-

teristic example of the way in which the scholastic magnates of Elizabethan England bantered and 'chaffed' one another with ponderous Latinity. A merry twinkle brightens the doctor's eye, and a mischievous devilry curls his lips and ripples his jolly visage with pleasant smiles, as he regrets to say that a grievous controversy has arisen between a certain Oxonian and the Cambridge orator, between a certain man who thinks himself a master and another who has declared his intention to behave like a lion; and as he, in concern for the evils which may flow to the state from so calamitous a contention, unfolds to us his purpose of taking a strictly impartial view of the arguments and evidence on both sides, and of deciding the quarrel of the disputants with the nicest attention to the requirements of justice. It is not to be imagined that he is a Cambridge man. No such thing. He is a Londoner, 'homo Londinensis, medio loco inter utrumque positus;' and as a dispassionate arbitrator, moderator, judge, he is just the person to mitigate annoyance, allay spites, and lure the wranglers back to desirable friendliness. It would be a scandal to the universities, and a perpetual triumph to the enemies of learning, should the Master use his cane on the lion, or the lion turn upon the Master with tooth and claw,* and rend him

* 'Gravis controversia orta est inter Oxoniensem quendam et Cantabrigiensem oratorem, de antiquitate utriusque Academiæ,

to pieces. It is clearly a case for a mild, placable, and sincere friend of both parties to the war to interfere with soothing courtesies and conciliatory explanations.

After this sprightly and ironical exordium 'Londinensis'—whose *nom de plume* of course neither concealed the real author of the essay nor mitigated the annoyance of his adversary—proceeded to pass judgment on the two contendents in a manner no less satisfactory to Orator Masters than offensive to the Master of University College. And, in order that he might omit nothing which could aggravate the Oxonian's fury, he published his treatise together with the pamphlet which it ridiculed, and, having conferred on the reprint the title that henceforth designated the essay, enriched it with numerous marginal annotations that were by no means calculated to make Thomas Key a happier man. In short, the doctor did everything which the most bilious of

gravior futura si lis non componatur. Nam alter quum se Masterum putet, alter se Leonem futurum dicat, et dente ungueque superbus confidat, metus est, rem alter re fuste transigat, si intractabilis esse alter pergat: alter oculos aut ungue eruat, aut dente crudeliter laceret, ni ille omnino conticescat. At quum Academiæ omnium virtutum matres sint, omnis pietatis et officii alumnæ denique atque oculi Regum quibus videant, et capita quibus sapiant et intelligant, Reipublicæ gravis noxa futura esset, si vim alterutra pateretur.'—Vide *De Antiquitate Cantabrigiensis Academiæ.*

Elizabethan reviewers could have achieved for the humiliation of a literary rival, without violating the rules of superficial courtesy and fair fight which scholars of the period were expected to observe in disputation.

The 'De Antiquitate Cantabrigiensis Academiæ' was a chief plank and principal nail in Thomas Key's coffin. No sooner had the Master of University College perused the caustic treatise, published in 1568, than he wrote in reply his 'Examen judicii Cantabrigiensis cujusdam, qui se Londinensem dicit, nuper de origine utriusque Academiæ lati;' but though this answer was circulated in manuscript, it seemed advisable to the author and his friends that it should not be put in type. Already an aged man when the 'De Antiquitate' appeared, Thomas Key, labouring under a painful consciousness of defeat, passed the remnant of his days in dejection; and having breathed his last in the university and college whose honour he had asserted, he was buried in the church of St. Peter-in-the-East, Oxford, just one year and two months before John Key was interred in the chapel of Caius College.

The time has long gone when Latin treatises on the antiquity of the universities were deemed choice reading by the inmates of colleges and the clergy of cathedral towns. Two centuries and twenty-five years have passed over the grave of Brian Twyne,

keeper of the archives of Oxford, who earned bright renown in his day by his 'Antiquitatis Academiæ Oxoniensis Apologia.' Nearly two hundred years have been added to the Christian era since Dean Fell, of Christchurch, and his fellow-conspirators translated into the language of the schools Antony à Wood's 'History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford,' to the pretended end that the fame of their university 'might be better known and understood beyond the seas,' but really, in order that they might gratify a pedantic taste by reading in comparatively inexpressive and pointless Latin what the historian had recorded in apt and characteristic English. Four human generations have slipped away since Thomas Hearne published, in two volumes, the particulars of the Caian controversy, together with certain other of such literary waifs and strays as the enthusiastic antiquary delighted to preserve from destruction. And at this present time, I question if erudition and scholarship of the most learned 'don' to be found in Oxford, would procure him readers, or save him from ridicule, if he were to employ them on the composition of a Latin assertion of his university's right, by reason of her superior age, to regard Cambridge as her inferior.

But the sentiment which inspired Orator Masters and the rival Keys in this preposterous strife about nothing cannot be said even yet to be utterly extinct.

It was only the other day that my good old friend Harold Pierrepoint, Canon of Babraham and Rector of Whittlebury, withdrew his subscription from the county paper, of which he had been a reader for more than forty years, because the new editor, departing from the ancient and orthodox usage of the journal, in his announcements of university intelligence, gave Cambridge the precedence over Oxford, in deference to what may be termed the alphabetical principle. 'The fellow who can do that,' said Harold hotly, 'would do anything;' and forthwith he wrote to the office of the 'Babraham Guardian' a letter which the proprietor will not speedily forget.

But then, Harold is of an expiring school, and delights to stand stubbornly on ancient ways. To this day he maintains that port is the only wine fit for a gentleman to drink, and persists in reading the office for King Charles the Martyr every thirtieth of January in Whittlebury Church.

CHAPTER II.

KING ALFRED'S EXPULSION FROM OXFORD.

THE great Samuel Johnson—the one supreme doctor who was his own prophet and had James Boswell for a biographer—is recorded to have remarked jocularly to a clerical friend that there were 'inexcusable lies and consecrated lies.' The stupendous fiction, with all its brood of confirmatory fibs, which for centuries caused the Saxon Alfred to be regarded as an Oxonian, was certainly no inexcusable lie, for it seems to have sprung, and certainly drew strength and substance, from a desire to glorify learning and exalt the scholar's vocation. Nor can it be classified with unconsecrated lies, if time and the sanction of sages can impart sacredness to a piece of historic romance.

But, notwithstanding the goodness of its purpose and the length of the period during which it passed for truth, the princely fabrication has lost its grandeur and splendour, and dwindled to the proportion and quality of an old wife's tale. Like the story of his

residence in the neatherd's hut, the narrative of the Saxon monarch's doings amongst the dons has fallen into disrepute. Driven from his college in the seventeenth and expelled from the university in the nineteenth century, the royal adventurer may be said to have quitted Alma Mater without a degree, and has so sunk in general estimation, that men would hear, without surprise, that he had no better title to his crown than to his reputation in the schools. Not that the fiction has utterly perished from the fond delusions which continue to charm the imaginations of men. There is a marvellous vitality in lies; and it cannot be doubted that centuries hence English children will burn their fingers with the Prince's cakes and that schoolboys will regard the neatherd's guest with mingled reverence and distrust as the patron of schoolmasters and ancientest of college tutors. But, by all persons who have looked into the facts of the case with minds competent to draw just conclusions from matters to which they give attention, it is universally admitted that the schools in which Alfred was long believed to have fostered learning on the banks of the Isis and the lustre which his patronage was supposed to have shed on those restored seminaries, are nothing more than the air-castles and romantic moonshine which certain monkish and other speculators on human credulity called into existence at a

time when feudal rule and ecclesiastical discipline had so drilled and subjugated our ancestors, that they were prone to regard every social institution as the work of a particular potentate, and could not conceive it possible for a collection of schools to become greatly prosperous and influential unless some chief of Church or State had contrived it, set it going, and granted it permission to prosper.

The fabrication consisted of two main inventions, each of which had its subordinate misrepresentations and distinct groups of subsidiary lies. There was the assertion, that Alfred had founded or restored a school, or schools, at Oxford; and there was the assertion, that University College, in the High Street of the University town, was the particular 'domus' which he had enriched by his munificence, and consecrated by his presence, and in which his soul had delighted beyond all other places of learning. Which is the older of these two main inventions I will not undertake to say positively. The more general story of Alfred's connexion with Oxford may have preceded the particular assertion of his connexion with University College; but as the only reputable authority for the first-mentioned of the two statements is a writer, who flourished when University College had been about a century in existence, and had moved from its original quarters to its present ground in the High Street, known facts do not forbid us to suspect

that, instead of appropriating and converting to its own honour a tradition which had long floated about the university, the college may have originated the entire Aluredian romance in which it was for centuries permitted to be the central point of interest.

Volumes of learned pedantry have been written, and tempers innumerable have been irretrievably ruined, in controversies about the question whether Alfred was the veritable founder of this particular house, and whether he had more than any man in the moon to do with the university. It is not my purpose to bore the reader by recounting the arguments and counter-arguments, the statements and counter-statements, of Alfred's friends and enemies. On the contrary it is my most grateful task to liberate mankind from every obligation to trouble their heads about a vain dispute. But whilst counselling all persons who wish well to themselves to regard all books, pamphlets, and articles about the Oxonian Alfred as so much waste paper, I may, in justice, rather than enmity, to a particular 'domus,' be permitted to say that, without committing myself to any irrevocable opinion on the question, I incline to regard University College as the source of the entire matter of controversy. Nor need the college at this date blush to admit the friendly impeachment of its veracity in past times. The fabrication, which I impute to its authorities of ancient date, had the merits of daring, completeness,

and a just appreciation of the dimensions and nature of human credulity. Its details were in the highest degree artistic; and in the way of groundless assertion it unquestionably was what our American cousins would designate 'a big thing.'

Not in the order of their origin, about which I know nothing, but in the order of their demolition, about which there is no uncertainty, each of the main fabrications shall be taken for a few moments under notice.

Founded when Alfred had been more than three hundred and fifty years in his grave, University College had occupied its present site in the High Street about forty years, when it was drawn into litigation with one Edmund Frauncis, a citizen of London, concerning certain lands and tenements in or near Oxford. The said Edmund Frauncis not only fought the college, but gave such proofs of strength and a determination to fight to his last broad-piece, that in alarm and subtlety the collegiate men resolved to win the king's favourable opinion and support by laying their case before him, together with assurances that their college ought to be a special object of concern to his royal care, since it had been founded by his great precursor of Saxon time, and had been the home of St. John of Beverley, the Venerable Bede, and divers other sages, who had been sleeping under ground for centuries, ere ever it occurred to William

of Durham, in the thirteenth century, to devote his wealth to the erection and maintenance of a scholastic house. Drawn in the French of the period by a scribe who was certainly equal to his task, their petition was sent to Richard the Second, in the seventh year of his reign, and in due course found its way to the Tower of London.

It is noteworthy—not to say 'suspicious'—that when inquiries were made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries respecting the origin of and authority for the story of Alfred's Oxford doings, the strongest evidence which could be adduced in its behalf was a spurious passage in William Camden's edition of the pseudo-Asser's 'Life of Alfred,' of which publication (printed and put forth during the full heat of an Aluredian row) the editor, when pressed on the subject by Brian Twyne, could give no better account than that it was the reproduction of a manuscript which he 'took to be written about K. Richard the Second his time.' As my good friend Sledgehammer, of the criminal bar, would observe in his proper place, it is remarkable that the spurious passage in the spurious 'Life of Alfred,' and the petition in which the authorities of University College first appear as claimants of Alfred for their founder, were literary productions of the same period —*if* reliance may be put on Camden's word given to Brian Twyne, and on his critical opinion of the age

of the manuscript from which he printed his edition of the pseudo-Asser's historic fiction. This coincidence of dates, from which more than one inference can be drawn, has been overlooked by writers about the pseudo-Asser forgeries. Of course it is only a coincidence. But, as Sledgehammer is continually remarking in the fearless discharge of duty, coincidences are the trifling things which decide whether men are to be killed at the gallows or left to the slower death of living on.

With remissness that will occasion surprise to none who know her well, History has omitted to record what effect the collegiate petition had on the contention between the scholars and Edmund Frauncis; but without her guidance we may be sure that, if the members of William of Durham's foundation were instigated by dishonest policy to weave into their petition an altogether imaginary account of their college, they lost no time in learning to believe the fiction to which they had given utterance. Henceforth it became their duty to sustain their alleged connexion with the Saxon king by frequent reiteration of the fable, and to live up to their pretensions, even as domestic ambition in the middle class of present society, after starting its carriage, is at pains to bear itself consistently with the new equipage. Whatever of untruthfulness may have attended its birth, the statement soon acquired

the credence of Oxonians; and for many a generation the sophist would have been accused of disloyalty to his university who had ventured to lessen the honour of the college by throwing doubt on its favourite tradition. In Henry the Sixth's time, when the college enlarged its quarters and formed itself into a hollow square, it did not omit to commemorate St. John of Beverley and the royal Alfred by placing their portraitures in windows of splendid glass. The snob of to-day resembles closely the snob of feudal time; and from what we see of men in Pall-Mall clubs we can infer that, besides the pleasure which they took in the ancientness of their imaginary descent, the men who paid for those glass windows found an egotistic delight in bragging about the royalty of their academic pedigree. Certain it is that for many a day William of Durham was an insignificant personage in the domus which his wealth had erected, in comparison with the saint and sovereign whom it was the humour of its fellows to extol as their chief benefactors. On gaudy days and pompous anniversaries the real founder was commended for his generosity and care in restoring what had not been begun till several years had passed over his grave; but the choicest flowers of enthusiastic and reverential eloquence were lavished on the imaginary founder by orators, who, if they had been half as civil to the man whose

liberality had given them their home and stipends as they were to men to whom they were indebted for nothing, would have been in no degree deficient in apparent thankfulness to the benefactor who furnished them with a foundation to swagger upon.

The doubts respecting Alfred's alleged right to be extolled for founding University College—doubts which had sprung or gained strength from the Elizabethan controversy concerning the antiquity of the two seats of learning—were exchanged for certainty in the later half of the seventeenth century by the strangest and least agreeable creature that ever rendered important service to English literature.

A large, lean, gaunt man, with a sour face, stooping shoulders, and shambling gait—Antony Wood had a sharp, spiteful temper that in no way belied the querulous expression of a countenance which was forbidding without being misshapen. Possessing no intellect that qualified him for higher work than the labour of grubbing and ferreting through old parchments for facts of comparatively small importance, he spent his life in the congenial toil of an antiquary, surrounded by materials adapted to his peculiar kind of curiosity. And it cannot be affirmed that he laboured to no purpose. By turns a sagacious recorder of accurate investigations and a greedy devourer of old wives' tales, he has pro-

duced books whose errors of knowledge, judgment, temper, do no harm, and sometimes yield amusement, whilst their redundance of reliable information is of daily service to the historian and biographer. Of a man who worked so resolutely and beneficially it may seem ungracious to speak with disrespect; but there is no obligation to exhibit generosity to the scribe who avenged private affronts by the cruel use of a poisoned pen, and never hesitated to asperse his political opponents with malicious accusations or insolent invective. Bare justice is alone due to the annalist who was signally deficient in fairness to others, and who, without the excuse of religious fervour, was such a virulent partisan that he could not mention Thomas Owen's interment in the Bunhill-Fields Cemetery without explaining that the graveyard was 'the new burying-place for fanatics.'

But hard though it is to deal generously with the man who was maliciously ungenerous to every one he disliked, it is much easier to laugh at poor Antony than to be angry with him. Sitting in his solitary, ill-furnished, comfortless chamber, amidst piles of worm-eaten folios and chests of parchments; or prying about the shelves of the Oxford booksellers, into whose shops he was wont to sneak whilst the colleges were at dinner, and he was not likely to encounter groups of boisterous undergraduates, ready to extract fun from his shyness

and awkwardness; or stealing out at nightfall, after a hard day's work, to eat in a cheap tavern the supper, which under ordinary circumstances was almost the only nutriment that he allowed himself in the twenty-four hours; or sitting in sullen silence over 'his pipe and pot' in the common room of 'some by-ale-house in town,' or village beer-shop;—he is such a grotesque object that to look at him, and at the same time refrain from laughter, is an impossibility for the observer who, whilst regarding his ill-favoured aspect and miserable apparel, recalls his peevish, boorish, snarling slanders against the ladies who dared to find homes under collegiate roofs.

Rumour, fully justified by many passages of his writings, put it about that the ill-clad and unsocial bookworm, notwithstanding his academic robe and degree, was a Papist; and in spite of the pains which his friends, I mean his associates—I beg his pardon, for he had no friends—took to demonstrate that he died within the pale of the Anglican Church, I am disposed to think that rumour did not greatly wrong the perverse, crotchety, cantankerous annalist, who deplored Edward the Sixth's disastrous reign, extolled Mary's beneficent rule, and became more than ordinarily morose and gloomy when he recalled the circumstances of Elizabeth's accession. Not that I credit him with any kind of genuine devoutness, or pay him the compliment of supposing that at any

period of his life he would have given away an old coat to help the Pope's cause. His attachment to Catholic opinion was nothing higher than an antiquary's preference for the older of the only two creeds about which he knew anything. His hatred of Nonconformists was cordial, but his virulence against them arose altogether from the occurrences which made him regard them as fanatics who, in their disrespect for old things, were likely to pull down all the colleges of the kingdom, and burn the contents of their innermost rooms. To his one-sided intellect Protestantism appeared an influence opposed to antiquarian interests—an influence prone, in periods of frenzy, to destroy old books, ancient manuscripts, obsolete furniture, rare seals, and other articles of first importance to a collector of time-stained curiosities; and therefore Antonius à Bosco (as Antony would style himself at moments of rare hilarity) disliked Protestants and their deplorably ruinous ways of protesting.

The life of such an Oxford graduate, in times which witnessed the abolition of episcopacy and were incessantly troubled by religious zealots, had no lack of vexations and crosses. Annoyances would, under any circumstances, have met poor Antony at every turn; but, in addition to inevitable grievances, his temper created for him enemies on all sides. If he treated the world scurvily, the world had its

revenge; and in his later days the laborious, baffled, embittered man of letters was about as unhappy a being as could have been found in all England. His expulsion from the university, to illustrate whose grandeur had been the chief task of his industrious career, must have cut him to the quick. He was afflicted with a malady that did not kill him until it had subjected him to the sharpest tortures. Worse still, he had a patron who extorted from him a reluctant consent that the 'History and Antiquities of Oxford' should be published in a learned tongue, and who then caused the author's pleasant English to be rendered inaccurately into decidedly unpleasant Latin. What with academic disgrace, strangury, and a patron, Antonius à Bosco suffered almost as much as he deserved.

Like most persons with a taste for communicating disagreeable news to their neighbours, Antonius gained credit for being a respecter and lover of the truth; though I am inclined to think that his love of truth was little else than a malicious delight in unearthing and proclaiming matters to the annoyance of individuals against whom he bore either a special grudge or the general ill-will which he cherished for nearly everybody. Had he been an M.A. of University College, instead of Merton, it is probable that he would not have troubled himself to demonstrate the fabulous nature of the stories which

represented the former house as the work of Alfred's hands. But the antiquary of Merton—a college only a trifle younger than the house which boasted loudly of its royal founder—had so long writhed under and resented the pretensions of William of Durham's men, that it would be absurd to imagine him animated by mere love of truth, when he put it clearly before the world that Merton College had taken up its present position ere ever University College had entered the High Street, and certainly within a very few years of the time when William of Durham's will first yielded fruit to certain scholars of the university; and that the recipients of the said William's benefactions had not occupied their abode in the High Street for half a century, when they had the effrontery to affirm that Alfred had laid its foundations for their advantage.

For a short time after administering this buffet to the 'senior filia universitatis,' the antiquary was a happy man; but soon the rose of his triumph was found to have a thorn which had inflicted an incurable wound on the hand that had rashly plucked it. To chuckle over the fable of University College was very pleasant; but Antonius à Bosco was by no means willing to relinquish his share in a scholastic association with the great Alfred. Since he had turned the king out of the college, was it not possible that further investigations would result in the monarch's ejection from the university, — an event

that would dim the lustre of the academy, throw doubt on every antique part of her not robust pedigree, and provoke the derision of jealous Cantabrigians. Clinging to the Aluredian fables for the honour of the university, whilst he derided those of them that tended only to the glorification of the house that was Merton's superior in antiquity, Antony strove to preserve his faith in what he knew to be fictitious. Of course the effort was not perfectly successful; and in a significant passage of his history of Oxford, with a doleful air and a whine that are inexpressibly comic, the poor man remarks concerning Alfred, 'That he either restored or founded the schools at Oxford, are not wanting many authors that support it, but they being not ancient (I mean before the Conquest) unless Asser, in his Exemplar before mentioned, hath put me much in doubt, *whether he did any thing at all at Oxford towards the advancement of learning.*' To this extreme point of scepticism had the credulous antiquary been reduced by inquiries into old tales.

In his particular way Antony was shrewd enough to know that the famous passage in Camden's 'Asser' was mere forgery; but after bolstering it up with Brian Twyne's memorandum, which at most only went to prove that the forgery was as ancient as Richard the Second's reign, he left his readers to form their own opinion of the spurious words, whilst

he held himself free to treat them as veritable history whenever it was his humour to do so.

Carping critics might sneer at the Asserian interpolation, but it was altogether satisfactory to ordinary mortals who, for many a day after the dust of Elizabethan controversy had settled on the floor of time, were pleased to assert on its authority that Alfred displayed admirable tact in his endeavours to allay the animosities that in his day inflamed the breasts of the Grymbaldians and older schoolmen, and converted their seat of learning into a field of rancorous warfare. After ceasing to be, in a special and invidious sense, a member of University College, Alfred continued for several generations to hold his ground in popular belief as the originator or most illustrious restorer of the whole university. It was all very fine for modern men, of Hallam's temper and capacity, to pass by the Aluredian claims with disdainful silence; but who was Hallam the new in comparison with Asser the old? What was a modern lawyer when put in the scales against an ancient bishop?

Even so late as some thirty years since, when Professor Huber, after being duly loaded and primed by dignitaries of Oxford and Cambridge, fired off his very entertaining volumes to the glorification of our two foremost national seminaries, the world was authoritatively encouraged to believe in the Alu-

redian romance. In those volumes — the grand puzzle of which is how the learned German came to know so little about the institutions of which he had learnt so much—the professor, after speaking, to the enthusiastic delight of Oxford gownsmen, with fervent admiration of Alfred, 'the hero, statesman, and sage, warmed by humanity, sanctified by religion, eminently cultivated in intellect, and abounding in genuine patriotism,' went on to declare his respect for the cock-and-bull stories which represent the Saxon king to have been Oxford's founder. The tradition was a reasonable tradition. It might be that there was a grievous absence of 'direct historical proof in its favour,' but still it was 'a tradition which had never been disproved.' It was sustained by the passage in Asser's 'Life of Alfred,' which was credible so far as it concerned Alfred, although it was manifestly absurd in 'explicitly telling of scholastic institutions at Oxford, not only in his day, but as far back as the fifth century.' No doubt the passage was open to objection, but it was not altogether an interpolation. 'My own mature judgment is,' said this astounding professor, 'that the beginning and end are authentic, in which are narrated the contests of the schoolmen and the efforts of Alfred to reconcile them. The intermediate part is very awkwardly interposed, and (I think) was interpolated in order to pretend the yet greater

antiquity of these institutions.' I don't like to be uncivil to a foreigner who had the courage to reprove university dons for their insufferable proneness to 'cant' when talking about the morality of undergraduates; but if this accommodating professor, who distinguished so nicely between the genuine and false words of a pedantic forgery, were my own countryman, and had no claim to exceptional courtesy and forbearance, I should not hesitate to suggest that he was guilty of a kind of cant, when, to the gratification of prejudiced supporters whom he was extremely anxious to please, he worked himself into an excitement about the virtues of the Oxonian Alfred, and asked men of letters to regard reverentially certain parts of a contemptible fabrication.

But, notwithstanding their flimsiness, and charlataneries, and undue reliance on Antony Wood, and superabundance of 'unadulterated bosh,' Professor Huber's volumes deserve respect, and will maintain a permanent place amongst the readable literature of authors who have illustrated the story of the English universities. Their worth was overrated five-and-twenty years since, but they have sterling and enduring value; and of their good results not the least important was the revival of inquiry into the nature of the pseudo-Asser's work, which resulted in a satisfactory verdict that no

single line of the oft-quoted 'Life of Alfred' was the work of his bishop, and that, though the work may perhaps have been written in the tenth century, there are strong grounds for the opinion that it was the performance of a literary concoctor, who did not ply his nefarious pen earlier than the middle of the eleventh century.

With cogency characteristic of his intellect, and courteous modesty no less characteristic of his temper and bearing, Mr. Thomas Wright, of the Society of Antiquaries, and of Trinity College, Cambridge, made it clear that Asser was a pseudo-Asser, that his famous biography was a comparatively recent piece of *litterateur's* patchwork. It followed that the famous passage, about which there had been so much angry dispute, and the spuriousness of which was demonstrated by its contents, was in fact a later falsehood woven into older fiction—a forgery wrought into a forgery—a lie hoping to pass itself off for truth, by pretending to be part of a more ancient lie. By rendering literature this service, Mr. Wright may be said, in language of 'the force,' to have laid his hand firmly on 'the scruff' of King Alfred's neck, and to have expulsed him from the university. But to do the royal intruder justice, the officer on duty had no need to use violence. Seeing that his game was up, and that his confederates could no longer sustain his rotten title, the

royal Saxon bowed politely to his adversaries, smiled affectionately on his crest-fallen friends, and, turning upon his heels, went into the country, where he has resided ever since, in the midst of a numerous circle of devoted admirers.

Mr. Wright's exposure of the pseudo-Asser was the conclusion of the long, wearisome, almost profitless contentions about the antiquity of the universities—contentions in which scholars of comparatively recent days occasionally lost self-respect, and scholars of remote time now and then shed their blood. A survey of the dispute affords consolations to each university. Though she has been compelled to give up her claims to Saxon descent, Oxford is allowed to have priority over Cambridge in respect of years. And though Cambridge has failed to establish her preposterous pretensions to antiquity, she has compelled Oxford to admit that they are both the offspring of the same period, and that her Aluredian legends are mythical.

CHAPTER III.

'CHUMS' AND 'INMATES.'

THE new lights on the history of Oxford tell us that the university came into existence between the Norman Conquest and the middle of the twelfth century, and that it had acquired considerable magnitude and importance before the opening of the following age, from which period there is a sufficiency of materials for a clear and reliable narrative of its growth and development. Towards the close of the eleventh century it began to be discernible on the social surface; a hundred years later it was a conspicuous object. In Henry the Third's time it received a royal charter, after it had acquired substance and shape corresponding in many important particulars to our modern notions of a great and powerful university. This vague outline of a narrative the cautious writers fill in with meagre and shadowy details, which stimulate curiosity without gratifying it and leave the student in a condition analogous to the state of things which once upon a

time incited a hungry lad to ask for a second helping of workhouse 'skilly.' A rural cookmaid would give as satisfactory an account of the origin and progress of any mushroom, on which she has put her eye as qualified to help her to an additional pint of catsup. The thing came, increased, grew big. When contrasted against the grandeur of the affair under consideration, the insignificance of the statement is absolutely ludicrous.

In the almost total absence of pertinent evidence to enlighten my ignorance or expose my blunders, I have no intention to imitate the conscientious reticence and timorous moderation of scribes, whose account of the university's earlier years is little more than a confession of their uncertainty about them. On the contrary, I have much pleasure in stating precisely how the original schools of Oxford were planted, how they took root, and how they grew into the imposing, and august, and complicated affair which, in compliance with an antiquated and highly absurd fashion, Oxonians are wont to call their Alma Mater.

Some five-and-twenty years had passed since the French robbers had settled themselves into the desirable English quarters, which plunder had bestowed upon them, when towards the last year of the eleventh century there might have been seen, wending their tardy way towards the walls of Ox-

ford, a party consisting of seven pedestrians, whose rusty habiliments and thoughtful countenances betokened their possession of learning and their want of money. Each of the wayfarers bore, slung from his neck, a wallet, of which the chief contents were a slenderly provided purse and the materials for a frugal meal. Each traveller also carried upon his shoulders an unobtrusive knapsack that contained a few manuscripts, and such articles as may be conveniently designated his household gods, but neither a clean shirt nor a change of outer raiment. Of various ages, between twenty-five and fifty years, these men had endured troubles and cherished divers ambitions; but of their private experiences and aims, it suffices for the purpose of this page to say that they were uncertificated members of the scholastic profession—a calling more honourable than honoured, when might was right, and noblemen thought it rather discreditable to be able to write their names legibly,—and that they were journeying to Oxford in the reasonable hope that they would be able to earn their livelihood by imparting their knowledge to the children of its burghers; in other words, to use language more befitting a lofty theme, by teaching the young idea how to shoot.

I am in a position to state the exact considerations which decided these dealers in learning to select Oxford as the scene of their future labours:

but as it would not answer my purpose to render the public altogether as knowing as myself, I shall not reveal the auspicious motives, until some critic has demonstrated to my satisfaction that the adventurers would have done better for themselves and society at large had they settled in Stoke Pogis, Mudfog-in-the-West, or Blathering-by-the-Sea.

Towards the close of a laborious day the seven comrades discerned the keep and modest tenements of the city, and ere the light had gradually faded into darkness they had found shelter appropriate to their lowly condition, and as occupants of the same bed were unconsciously recruiting their energies for the anxious duties of the morrow. If the reader may not enjoy the belief that sleep afforded them previsions of all that Dr. Arnold would do some seven centuries later for their despised vocation, he may at least find comfort in the assurance that their repose was disturbed by no apprehensions of professional failure.

It might be imagined that these founders of Oxford University, before announcing their readiness to instruct pupils, built or hired houses in which to receive their little friends; but they did no such thing. To employ masons and purchase ground was beyond the means of men who did not even deem themselves justified in becoming the tenants of a single important edifice. It was a time for small

beginnings; and the settlers were glad to obtain the use of some unfurnished chambers and ramshackle outhouses, from householders whose notions of rent were the reverse of exorbitant. One of the adventurers acquired for a few pence, paid half-yearly, a spacious and cobwebby garret at the top of a cord-wainer's dwelling; another was so fortunate as to secure a room over a beer-shop; a third, the most successful of the party, contrived to get possession of a disused stable, a loft, an old hen-house, and a small court containing a large water-butt, on the understanding that he would teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, to his landlord's three sons.

Having acted on reliable information, the seven teachers were not long without an adequate number of scholars. The traders of the town had for a considerable time been in want of competent instructors for their sons, and were not slow in giving a trial to the new-comers, who no less speedily justified the confidence of their employers and conciliated the social opinion of the town. Every successive three months saw an enlargement in their classes, which soon comprised youngsters who came daily into Oxford for teaching from homesteads beyond the walls. And as the success of the Oxford pedagogues was rumoured about the country, other scholastic bread-seekers appeared in the city; so that, before a generation had passed away, the academic profession

had become an important feature of the permanent population of the place.

And here let one pause to impress on readers the importance of the service which the last few paragraphs have rendered to historical literature. Already has this chapter shown what no previous work has dared to demonstrate. When the seven primitive settlers had hired their first quarters, the university was planted; when the townspeople sent children to their classes, the university had taken root; so soon as fresh teachers, following in the wake of the pioneers, opened fresh schools, the university was on the road to fame. After all, it is no such difficult matter to write history in the absence of facts; and when I reflect on the ease with which I am throwing off this luminous narrative of scholastic doings in the dark ages, I marvel how timid chroniclers of the same matters have been deprived of nerve by the very circumstances which should have inspired them with serviceable audacity.

When the Oxford teachers had flourished for a few years as the teachers of day-schools, the more energetic and speculative of them tried their fortune in the lodging-house line of their ignoble profession, and began to offer their young friends the advantages of a comfortable home, together with the benefits of sound instruction. Just as the old law-schools of London, that preceded the establishment

of the Inns of Court and Inns of Chancery on the outskirts of the City, were called Inns of Law or Hostels for Law Students, these Oxford boarding-schools were designated hotels or inns by the unlearned vulgar, as well as by the scholars themselves, who, however, soon contracted a pedantic fashion of calling them Aulæ, or Scholars' Halls. These ancient colleges had no foundations, no real or personal property yielding snug incomes to principals and tutors, whether they lived in industry or idleness. Each of them was the private and commercial speculation of the chief master or principal, who hired and furnished the building, provided bedding and food for its 'inmates,' and paid salaries to such subordinate masters as he required to assist him in offices of instruction. If the master failed to draw scholars, his creditors compelled him to shut up shop. If after achieving success in scholastic industry he failed, through loss of mental competence or growing indolence, to sustain the reputation and popularity of his establishment, younger and more vigorous competition soon cut the ground from under his feet, and rendered his inn a losing concern.

The first of these inns had not been established many years, when there were about a score of such seminaries in the full swing of business within a mile and a half of St. Mary's Church; and when the boarding-schools had thus increased and multiplied,

the Oxonian seminaries and scholars were divisible into two main classes,—boarding-schools and their pupils; day-schools and their learners. It does not appear that for some time the one class claimed any superiority over the other. The boarding-schools were mainly supported by parents living at a distance from Oxford, who preferred to send their children to places where they would be taken in and done for, rather than throw them into a large and growing town, in a condition of comparatively masterless freedom. But though the inns relied chiefly on comers from the provinces, they did not disdain to receive day-boarders at their classes. On the other hand, though the day-schools were the special seminaries for children who had parents or friends living in Oxford, their classes were attended by students who had come to them from remote parts of the kingdom, and who, though subject to the ferula and birch in school-hours, slept in their own lodgings and 'found for themselves' in every thing except instruction.

In course of time, however, the boarding-schools surpassed the private day-schools in number and influence; and from circumstances,—which, I suspect, were consistently misrepresented by persons interested in the suppression of the day-schools and the exaltation of the boarding-schools,—it came to pass that the students, who omitted to join one of

the numerous inns, became objects of dislike and contempt to their academic superiors. For generations it had been the fashion for these innless students to 'chum' together in parties. Sometimes so few as three or four, sometimes so many as a dozen, of them would be sharers of the single 'camera,' *i.e.*, chamber, whence they derived their appellation of 'chums.' That these poor lads were in many cases idle and dissolute,—that they were more or less given to drunkenness and turbulence, I do not doubt, since Oxonians of all kinds in the feudal days were disorderly and quarrelsome fellows, and were prone to run after liquor whenever they had money in their pockets. But in the agitation which exhibited the chamber-students,—the 'camerâ degentes' of the statutes, the 'chamberdekyns' of ordinary parlance,—to the detestation of the aularians, or 'inmates,' I detect the action of the schoolmasters who, deriving fresh profit from every new development of the boarding-school system, were bent on suppressing the private day-schools, and on compelling every student to render tribute to some keeper of a hall; and who, jealous of the townspeople, could not endure that they should participate in the lucrative business of providing scholars with lodging and food. Anyhow, in the course of years, a spirit of mutual enmity arose between the dwellers in halls and the dwellers

in lodgings. To be an 'inmate' was honourable; to be a 'chum' or 'chamber-dekyn' was abominable. The struggle between the 'inmates' and 'chums,'—the mates of inns and the sharers of chambers,—was fruitful of numerous broils in the streets, and of some important additions to the statutes of the university, and eventually resulted in a revolution which gave the keepers of boarding-schools and their confederates nearly everything for which they had contended, by endowing them with an almost complete monopoly of learning within the limits of the university. It is worthy of remark, that during the struggle between the aularian scholars and the chamber-dekyns, the term 'inmates' acquired a significance almost identical with 'schoolmate;' a meaning which it has, perhaps, not even yet altogether lost. Also, it should be remembered, that after a lapse of several generations, the term 'chamber-mate' or 'chum' lost its opprobrious force, so that in Elizabethan university life, undergraduates, sharing the same chamber, were wont to call one another familiarly 'chums.'

Whenever a riot occurred at Oxford, the blame of it was assigned chiefly to the chamber-students in the days when the masters combined to put down the lodginghouse system. To render them peculiarly odious, and secure their extinction, it was represented that the chamber-dekyns were fierce and

murderous Irishmen, who congregated in Oxford for bloodshed and rapine, instead of for learning and good manners. Hence, a fashion arose of speaking of chamber-dekyns as Irish and ferocious foreigners. Henry the Fifth was reigning when academic life was disturbed by events concerning which our scarcely impartial old friend, Antonius à Bosco, remarks, 'As the University, therefore, was troubled at this time, and before, with heretics (as they were now called), so was it now with a sort of scholars called chamber-dekyns, no other, as it seems than Irish beggars, who. in the habit of poor scholars, would often disturb the peace of the University, live under no government of principals, keep up for the most part in the day, and in the night-time go abroad to commit spoils and manslaughter; lurk about in taverns and houses of ill report; commit burglaries, and such like. All which being generally noted, and complaints made to the king of the said misdemeanours, a statute was made by the parliament, which speaketh that "forasmuch as divers offences had been committed by the Irish scholars in Oxford, all Irish people should depart the realm, except some that were religious, and others that were graduates, upon condition of putting in security for their good behaviour, and that they take not upon them the principality of any hall or hostle, but rather be under the principality of others, and

that no Irish should presume to come to either of the universities, unless he show the chancellor of either, testimonial letters from the Lieutenant or Justice of Ireland of his good behaviour. If otherwise, he was to be punished as a rebel to the king." ' For all which Antony's authority is the brief edict of 1 Henry V., which has been translated from its original French : 'Item, for the quietness and peace within the realme of England, and for encreas and restorynge of the land of Irlande, it is ordeyned and stablyshed in this present Parlyament that all Iryshmen and Irysh clerkes beggars, called chamberdeckens, be voyded out of the realm.'

But it was easier to make laws than to enforce them in the fifteenth century; and nine years after the publication of Henry the Fifth's parliamentary edict against the Irishry of Oxford, the battle between the 'chums' and 'inmates' was still raging fiercely, when the chancellor and masters of the university ordered, by a special statute, the expulsion of the chamberdeckens—*i. e.* all those students *in statu pupillari* who were too poor to pay for board and lodging in the house of one of the licensed schoolmasters. 'About the same time, also, the university made a statute against such (says Antony Wood, under date 1422) who in the form of scholars lurk in divers places within the University, who were neither of any hall or under the

government of a principal, called by the wicked name of Chamberdekanys, by whom the peace of the University being disturbed, as 'tis mentioned in 1413; the University therefore, for the better finding them out, to the end that they might be banished, ordered that all members that took commons in any college or hall should lodge within them, under pain of imprisonment for the first time of offending, &c. So that since this time I think Oxford, styled by Balæus "Gymnasium Hibernorum," hath little been frequented by Irishmen, because chiefly they were excluded the principality of halls or inns, or government or tutelage in the University.'

There was a strange difference between the chamberdekyn of fact and the chamberdekyn of a strongly prejudiced inmate's imagination. To his adversaries the poor fellow was a species of academic Fenian, nursing diabolical passions beneath a repulsive exterior, and waiting for an opportunity to wreak his spite against learning on the lives and property of learned men. A creature of sallow visage and wolfish eyes, of shaggy locks and tattered clothes, marvellously patient of hunger in the absence of food, but disgustingly voracious of meat whenever it fell in his way, a drunkard by taste and a thief by necessity, he was equally alert to cut purses and throats, and cherished no sweeter

ambition than to rifle the benefactors' chests in the treasury of St. Mary's Church. Charity and common sense, however, countenance a suspicion that the poor fellow's worst offence against his superiors was want of money, that his gravest sins against society resulted from the badness of his drink rather than from the evil of his nature, and that his great crime against himself was recklessness begotten of misery and a keen sense of injustice. No doubt there was a basis of truth in some of the lighter charges preferred against him; and it may be that the welfare of the university required the suppression of his class; but his denouncers rouse sympathy for him by their violence, and demonstrate their malignity by extravagant assertions. A man is not necessarily an Irishman because he lives in lodgings; nor is poverty a conclusive proof that its victim is a Celtic conspirator.

When they had brought about the enactment of the university statute against the chamberdekyns, the principals of inns and their supporters had attained their chief desire, and congratulated themselves enthusiastically on the speedy extirpation of the unprofitable students. Nor to men taking their view of the question was the victory an affair for ordinary thankfulness. Though its provisions were repeatedly disregarded in later times, and it was not at any time so rigidly enforced

as the more intolerant inn-keepers wished it to be, the statute was an enduring declaration on the part of the university authorities in favour of the scholastic houses, and of the system of academic government which required every student to be a registered member of, and habitual resident within, a master's hall. That the decision was a genuine expression of university opinion, and that it accorded with the sentiments of the majority of persons interested in the welfare of the schools, there is no room for doubt. It was also agreeable to the prevalent views of the period that saw the rapid progress of the collegiate movement which had begun some hundred and fifty years earlier.

There are some, no doubt, who will resent the suggestion that the action of the principals and teachers against the 'chums' was the result of that tendency towards a protective policy which characterised all the numerous commercial and industrial associations of the feudal epoch. Liking cheerful views, I anticipate some rough handling on this point; but, though I am not over-nice or squeamish about offending people in the way of duty, I would provide against misrepresentation by expressly acquitting the Oxonian principals of being actuated by selfish greed, that was neither qualified nor palliated by sincere belief that the abolition of the university lodger franchise and of the day-school system would

conduce no less to the good of the entire scholastic community than to the private interests of the keepers of halls. For the most part they were fairly honest and conscientious men; but, like the great majority of human kind, they were more than ordinarily zealous for public benefit when its attainment would result in special advantage to themselves.

And now the reader must right-about-face, and, leaving the chamberdekyns of the fifteenth, return to the schoolmasters of the twelfth, century.

The Oxford schoolmasters of the earlier half of the twelfth century were a strange and heterogeneous lot of fellows,—teachers who had failed to get pupils in other towns; scape-graces turned out of the monasteries for indiscretions not permissible in such inferior and ministering persons as the assistant pedagogues of the choristers and other lads educated in the conventual seminaries; Saxon outlaws who, finding the life of patriotic foresters less agreeable in practice than imagination, had escaped from their companions of the woods in search of the more secure though less romantic experience of scholastic employment; peccant curates and other ecclesiastical delinquents, who had fled from their proper districts just soon enough to escape episcopal punishment; clerks whose patrons had kicked them out of castles or manorial halls for lampooning their mistresses, sneering at their betters, or falsifying accounts.

Soberer and sounder men were the associates of these less reputable adventurers; but when the most favourable view is taken of the originators of the Oxonian Alma Mater, it cannot be doubted that their ranks comprised a dangerous proportion of scholastic Adullamites and literary rascals.

Fortunately, however, for themselves and posterity, these 'odd fellows' did the right thing in settling at Oxford. Their schools throve, and arrived at lucrative celebrity all the sooner, because they were not required to undermine any older academies in social esteem before they could obtain from the world a due consideration of their own merits. Hence the aggregation of schoolmasters grew with a rapidity which is very astonishing, when the smallness and sparseness of the population are taken under observation; and not less quickly than the supply of teachers, grew the number of applicants for instruction, who found their ways to the town of many schools in pedestrian or mounted companies, that usually journeyed from distant parishes under the guidance and control of persons authorised by the Oxford teachers to conduct young scholars to the temple of knowledge.

So soon as their success was considerable and promised to be permanent, the Oxonian teachers formed themselves into a co-operative association for the protection of their interests against rivals in

business, and against the exacting temper of their employers. In the twelfth century, and every age of the feudal epoch, such a conspiracy arose, as a matter of course, whenever a new industry acquired sufficient importance to bring together a large number of workers. The first occupiers of an industrial field, that bade fair to be lucrative, voted themselves into a trades-union, which arrogated to itself the exclusive right of deciding, within a certain district, in what manner and for what considerations apprentices should be trained to their craft, at what rates their skilful labour should be bought and sold, and on what terms adventurers should be received within the limits of the confederates' assumed jurisdiction. 'Guild' was the familiar term for such a combination of workers.

Of course the members of every guild made pleasant professions of fraternal love for the freemen of their brotherhood, and consistently maintained that their union was framed altogether for the general good of society, and for no selfish object. But for their guild, urged the incorporated Leathern Breeches Makers of Blathering-by-the-Sea, and other like associations for protecting the public interests in leather leggings, the country would endure grievous ills. Raw and incompetent needlemen, who had never been properly trained in youth, would be palming themselves off upon the public as reliable fabricators

of man's most important habiliments. Cordwainers and subsidiary tanners, no longer restrained from vicious practices by the salutary influence of the Breeches-Guilds, would flood the country with rotten leather, that would speedily succumb to strain and friction. Honest citizens would be defrauded of their money by rogues dealing in artificial integuments of a specious but altogether delusive appearance; and ere three generations had passed away, old England would have lost for ever the mystery and art of making sound nether-garments, a mystery and art which, like all the other subtle elements of national greatness, when once destroyed, could never be supplied. It was thus that the case of co-operation was put by thriving guildsmen, whose representations, I regret to say, instead of finding universal favour, were insolently derided by caustic, ill-conditioned, bitter fellows—just such men as the Oxonian teachers, in days prior to their success—who, having no material investments or monopolies of their own to teach them common sense, cherished a hateful and morbid theory that a guild was a club which, whilst covering its purely selfish designs with fair pretences, aimed at the enrichment of its own members at the expense of the rest of the community.

Following the example of all other successful workers, the Oxford schoolmasters formed them-

selves into a guild, but instead of applying that unimpressive and too familiar title to their corporation, they preferred to style their guild a 'universitas'—a word which well became a combination of dealers in learning, whose chief article of trade was a rude Latin, and which aptly expressed the oneness of their corporate existence—the condition of unity into which the interests of numerous individuals had been brought.

Jealous of the new teachers who were steadily journeying to Oxford, allured by rumours of the scholastic activity of the place, and actuated by motives easily imagined by any usher who has broken into his last sovereign, the 'universitas' raised a double barrier against the intruders, by laying down rules for their admission within the scholastic fraternity, and fixing the remunerations of scholastic labour. No teacher should be free of the guild until he had performed certain exercises exhausting to the pocket of the exerciser, undergone certain courses of instruction beneficial to the instructors, and paid certain fees to the guild which he desired to enter. For the pupils attending the various schools, 'universitas' laid down rules analogous to the regulations of industrial guilds for the government of apprentices. 'Universitas' ordained that boys should receive preliminary instruction in the private grammar-schools before entering the higher

lecture-rooms; that each scholar, after emerging from his preparatory school, should attend certain lectures, and take part in certain disputations, before he could assume the sophistic name and hood; and that he should perform other tasks and figure in other ceremonies before he could ask the chancellor or his deputy to grant him permission to discharge the august functions of a full-blown B.A. And so on, from the humbler to the highest of the distinctions which 'Universitas' offered to the world's wonder and to the ambition of the learned, conditions of service and pecuniary payment were fixed for the attainment of each honour. No one can deny that 'Universitas' made the most of her opportunities, and was a very shrewd lady of business. Within Oxford and its vicinity, no master was allowed to keep a school who neglected to pay his proper dues to the guild; and as the repute of being an Oxford scholar grew more and more saleable, 'Universitas' devised various new kinds of academic honour, and distributed more or less of them on her alumni, in proportion as they heightened her prosperity by residing in her schools or bringing grist to her mill.

Although I know nearly everything about Oxford in the dark ages, I regret to acknowledge that it is not in my power to state the exact year in which the academic guild was formed; but since Robertus

Canutus was the officially recorded 'Rector Scholarum' so early as 1122, it is clear that the association was in existence in the days of Henry the First, and that the schoolmasters had not long been at Oxford before they created a brotherhood for the good of their profession and the advantage of the public. Some hundred years had still to elapse before 'Universitas' obtained royal recognition in the shape of her charter; but as the actual ruler of the Oxford teachers, and the controller of their actions when they had left the seat of learning, she was in existence in the earlier part of the twelfth century.

So long as 'Universitas' was nothing more than a voluntary association of schoolmasters, having the authority of no royal charter, and possessing no power to enforce their edicts by lawful means, it lay within the province of any daring intruder to beard the Rector Scholarum, and act upon his natural right to render himself useful to his fellow-creatures by opening a school without the Guild's sanction. But he would have been a rash and misguided man, who had dared to defy the scholastic chief. Right or no right, 'Universitas' would have gained an easy, though probably not a bloodless, triumph over such an offender. The Oxonian of old time, as we shall soon see, was even more liberal of blows than words in moments of anger, and had an ugly way of sustaining

his arguments—with fists sent out straight from the shoulder, a cudgel brought down murderously on his opponent's head, or, in cases of extreme urgency, a knife sent well home under his enemy's fifth rib. Terribly loyal to 'Universitas,' this scholastic union-man, without a single twinge of conscience, would have made short work with any interloper who transgressed the rules of trade; and, after braining and kicking him into the Cherwell, would have returned to his inn, secure of his principal's approval. 'Rattening' is an art cultivated wherever men congregate, and it was an art of which the mediæval Oxonian was a vigorous, though inelegant, practitioner.

CHAPTER IV.

CLAUSTRAL SCHOOLS AND BENEFACTIONS.

HITHERTO notice has been taken only of the secular schools, *i.e.*, schools under the government of laymen, or of priests belonging to the secular species. Nor is there any need to devote much time and thought to the 'claustral schools,' which the monks and friars built within the lines of the university, and supplied with teachers: for whilst, on the one hand, the claustral schools closely resembled the secular schools in all social and pictorial respects, it is, on the other hand, certain that the academies of the regular clergy, notwithstanding the disturbances occasioned by the Oxonian monks and friars in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, made no greatly important contribution to the life of the university that survived the abolition of the regular orders.

There is, indeed, an antiquarian's argument—based on inferences drawn from old boots and college gowns—which asks us to believe that, because the Oxonian Masters of ancient days wore boots or high-

lows (before their adoption of academic pantofles or slippers), similar to the boots of the Benedictine monks, and dark gowns, resembling the vestes of those same swarthy 'regulars,' it follows that the Benedictines had a preponderating influence in the affairs of the university. The force of this suggestion is not increased by the simplicity with which its originator affirms that the Black Monks frequented the university in King Alfred's days and assisted that monarch in works of literary restoration. Even if it is granted that scholars copied their dress in some particulars from the monks, the inference is not justifiable. We don't necessarily admit to our closest confidence the man whose taste in dress commands our approval.

A far stronger and more plausible argument, in favour of this theory of monastic influence on the university, might be drawn from the fact that the scholastic monks originated the fashion for students to call their teachers 'dons' or 'lords'—a fashion jocularly observed to this day by undergraduates. Whilst the secular priests were called 'sirs,' when not described by their academic degrees, the monks, constituting a higher degree of clergy, were termed 'domini,' 'dons,' 'lords.' Illustrations of this colloquial mode of distinguishing between the aristocatic and plebeian sections of the national priesthood may be found in Chaucer and other writers of the

fourteenth century. And it is worthy of passing remark, that in the case of the famous lecturer, Don Scotus, the title was so corrupted, that the professor was universally termed Duns Scotus,—whence came the opprobrious word 'dunce.' From which it appears that 'don, a wise lord,' and 'dunce, a fool,' are variations of the same title. But in accounting for the early adoption of the monastic title by the Oxonians, the reader is under no need to think that it resulted from any direct influence of the regular clergy on the affairs of the university. For centuries monks had been the chief teachers, and monastic schools the principal seminaries of English boys, who of course were trained to call their instructors 'lords.' Hence the schoolboys of the entire country derived from the monastic schools an universal fashion of 'my lording' their pedagogues,—a fashion which they were never instructed to lay aside on becoming Oxonians. Probably enough they attributed not much more of ennobling significance to the familiar term, than school-children of recent date gave to the almost obsolete title 'dominie.'

The regular clergy were amongst the many persons who congratulated the Oxonian schoolmasters very cordially on their success when it became desirable to participate in it; and they proved the sincerity of their polite speeches by doing their best to share in, and gain credit for, a triumph

which had been achieved without their assistance. But, notwithstanding their exertions and the proximity of Oseney Abbey, the monks of the older sorts never flourished greatly within the jurisdiction of the learned corporation. They founded schools, which were for a time well attended, and were never without frequenters; and they gave rise to several sanguinary riots in the vicinity of St. Mary's; but the Oxonians were for the most part decidedly antagonistic to the regulars, who had better have spared themselves the pains which they took to conquer the university.

Nor were the new monks—the brothers of the Mendicant Orders—much more successful in their boisterous attempts to render themselves the chief teachers and dominant power of the guild. On their first arrival in England they settled in Oxford; and, emboldened by the success of the begging-priests in foreign universities, they conceived an ambition to control the schools and students of the English seminary. In this hope they were signally defeated, in spite of the boldness, and zeal, and unscrupulous subtlety with which they strove to effect their purpose. For a brief while—until their insolence and encroachments had revealed the nature of their professions of lowliness, and roused the jealous antagonism of the Oxonian scholars and laity—they seemed in a fair way to achieve their aim; but in

the end they were compelled to yield to the forces which they had irritated by alternate flatteries and menaces. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the friars kept the scholars in a continual ferment, and besides occasioning a series of violent disputes gave rise to several sanguinary riots. But their policy effected nothing that compensated them for the ill-will which it drew upon their entire class. The influence of their great adversary, Wycliffe, with the seculars of the University was largely due to the firmness and uncompromised vehemence with which he opposed the Mendicants, whose unscrupulous machinations to draw students to their schools and inns were repaid by the satires which held them up to general odium as 'stealers of children.'

Originating in the first instance from the exertions of laymen and secular priests, and owing none of their success to the monastic organisations which have been erroneously credited with their production, the Oxford schools retained their first distinctive characteristics in spite of the endeavours of rival 'orders' to make them mere appendages to monasticism. The guild, which they had united to create, received the teachers of monastic orders with proper liberality, but the aggregation of schools remained the principal seat of learning for laymen and secular clergy. Whilst the monks and friars

educated in the various colleges of their several orders merely regarded Oxford as a social power on which they would do well to lay hands as an engine for influencing the humbler people, the lay-students and secular ecclesiastics looked to the Universitas with jealous pride as a seminary called into being for their special benefit by men belonging to the one or the other of their own social kinds. The Reformation found the place frequented by laymen, of whom a considerable proportion had joined the University without any intention of taking sacred orders, and found it also the chief school for the secular clergy; that is to say (for it is needless to obscure simple things with grand words), the school where rude lads bent on becoming parish-priests acquired the smattering of Latin, and Logic, and Bible, which constituted the ordinary knowledge of a parish-priest in the earlier half of the sixteenth century.

Less embarrassing and more beneficial than the perilous co-operation of the regular clergy were the attentions which the Oxford schoolmasters received from the opulent and noble persons who, like the patron of Samuel Johnson's experience, had watched with unconcern the danger of 'Universitas,' whilst she was struggling for life, but were ready enough to help when she had reached ground and could shift for herself. So long as the guild of school-

masters was in urgent need of founders and benefactors it found few wealthy supporters, and not a single protector in the rank of princes. But so soon as the teachers had made themselves a power in the land—'a connexion' that it was agreeable to know and prudent to conciliate—in accordance with the first instincts of princely nature, the magnates of earth came to their support.

The thirteenth was the century in which 'Universitas' received her first important benefactions; the 'chests' which yielded relief to poor scholars, and the munificent foundations of William of Durham, John Balliol, and Walter of Merton. It was also the century in which she first obtained the protection of royalty, certified by charter—some six centuries from the present time, and something less than two hundred years after the first plantation of her earliest schools; about a century before the establishment of legal colleges in the vicinity of London, and some two hundred years before 'the chums' were driven from Oxford by 'the inmates.'

CHAPTER V.

SCHOOLS AND SCHOLARS.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the university was seen in full work, with its two orders of schools—the preparatory grammar-schools, in which children acquired the first elements of learning; and the higher schools, in which older students, varying from eleven years of age to early manhood, attended lectures, said lessons, held disputations, and performed the various exercises preliminary to attainment of degrees. Just as the inns of the London lawyers—institutions, by the way, that copied the method and arrangements of the university—comprised preparatory schools (in the houses of Chancery) for pupils of tender years and beginners in legal study, as well as higher schools for the instruction of older and more advanced learners, there flourished within the university establishments for the training of quite little boys and class-rooms for big boys and young men.

The older pupils performed most of their exercises

under cover; but they also took part in disputations that were carried on in the open air, in the precincts of St. Mary's Church and the central schools, just as the students of Lincoln's Inn argued points of law in the cloisters under their chapel, and the youngsters of either Temple wrangled in the *pervise* or precinct of their hall. The exercises thus performed by 'general sophisters,' in the presence of bachelors, in the pervise (or 'parvis') of the schools, were said to be performed 'in parvis,' or 'in parvisiis,' whence in recent times the first examinations of undergraduates came to be called 'smalls' and 'little go.'

Notwithstanding the adverse influence of civil commotions, which more than once in the middle ages led to the comparative desertion of the schools and temporary cessation of their studies; and notwithstanding outbursts of pestilence—an enemy which the Oxonian teachers of old time dreaded as much as the modern schoolmaster dreads an outbreak of scarlatina in his academy—the university made rapid advances to the state in which men of the last century found her. The day of benefactions having arrived, old Oxonians more and more frequently gave, by living hand or last testament, sums of money to the academic guild, for the benefit of poor students in particular inns, or for the relief of the general body of indigent students. Schoolmasters also, on retiring from life or business, in cases where

they owned the inns of which they were principals, sometimes made them over to the corporation, whose interest it would be to preserve them as seminaries for children. Hence some few of the inns acquired permanent endowments, of which their mates participated under the guardianship of the university. And whilst the more fortunate inns thus grew in power and the elements of durability, acquiring the material prosperity which has enabled them to survive to the present day under the title of halls, there arose new colleges—hotels that differed from other permanently endowed inns in being separate corporations, invested with powers of self-government and the right to possess and manage their own estates.

The reader, however, must continue to think of the university of this period as an aggregation of schoolmasters, some of whom kept preparatory boarding-schools for young children, whilst others were principals of the superior inns in which the pupils of the higher grades resided, and not a few, content with the mere profits of teaching, and having no appetite for the fluctuating gains of an inn-keeper, earned their livelihood by instructing classes of the elder scholars, who were subject to them only whilst in actual attendance at their lectures.

Even the omniscient scribe of these pages hesitates to declare the precise number of the schools open at any one time of this period within the jurisdiction of

the Rector Scholarum, or, as he has now come to be called, Chancellor of the University. But they must have been numerous, though less so than Antonius à Bosco would have us believe. Besides the grammar-schools in the preparatory inns for children, there were the schools in the inns for adult pupils; the schools in which Latin-masters, logic-teachers, arithmeticians, professors of music, and proficients in other largely-taught arts, were visited daily by their classes; the principal school-rooms of the three faculties, Law, Divinity, and Physic; and the scores of chambers in which, during full term, the artists performed their exercises for B.A. and M.A. degrees. An artist often experienced great difficulty in hiring a room, in which to go through his academic paces before the requisite number of qualified witnesses; and in his inability to secure a chamber near St. Mary's Church, the centre of scholastic activity, he was thankful for permission to achieve his intellectual feats in a room over a victualler's shop in one of the back streets.

It may not be supposed that the best schools were such buildings as the New Schools, still in existence; and the mistake would be yet greater to imagine that they had any of the architectural merits of the Divinity School, which was built towards the end of the fifteenth century. Before the Abbot of Oseney erected his ten schools in School Street, some forty years before the completion of the Divinity

School, the Oxford students had not a university class-room of larger dimensions or finer architecture than what would now-a-days be thought a discreditably mean school-house for a country village. By that time Oxford had some eight or nine colleges, provided with halls of considerable magnitude and comparatively noble rooms; but the buildings of the university, with the signal exception of St. Mary's, were greatly beneath her social importance. In short, the schools were paltry little closets, meanly built and cheaply furnished, in the fashion of the modern village dominie's place of business.

More than thirty of these class-rooms were to be found in School Street, the thoroughfare which, in times prior to the erection of the new schools, extended from St. Mary's Church up to the northern boundary of the city, and which was so peculiarly devoted to learning, that artists performing public exercises for degrees were for a time not allowed to accomplish them elsewhere if School Street had accommodation for them. For the most part, these class-rooms, like the inns to which several of them were attached, bore the names of teachers who had first brought them into vogue by their learning, or eloquence, or some such personal peculiarities as a large nose or a bald head. Their doors, also, were in many cases distinguished by inscriptions, proclaiming the particular kinds of learning obtainable

within; and, now and then, a dealer in knowledge, to distinguish his shop from rival stalls in the same neighbourhood, would hang out an ordinary shop-sign. Antony Wood, a capital authority for such details, speaks of 'divers schools and halls having been distinguished by certain signs over their doors, or on the walls within them.' Thus Ox School, in School Street, is mentioned by the antiquarian as the house 'ubi bos depingebatur,'—a sign which also distinguished Beef Hall, in the parish of St. Ebbe's, from all other boarding-houses of its kind. Brasenose College, occupying ground which was the very centre of the scholastic activity of Oxford, derives its name from a hall which it absorbed, and which was rendered conspicuous in old time to all who sought its gate by the the sign of a Brazen Nose.

The Oxonian of the present day, who resents being told that the splendid university, of which he is no unworthy member, had its origin in a combination of pedagogues who 'keeped schules and cau'd them acaadamies,' is not likely to be pacified by aught that I can tell him of the style, social status, and general condition of his academic precursors in times before the Reformation. Indeed, this cup of new thought and old story will prove no pleasant compound to any representative of young Oxford who takes so erroneous a

view of the antecedents of his seminary, and cherishes so false a conception of its historic dignity, as to admire it for having been the peculiar nursery of aristocratic or comparatively affluent youth in feudal days, or to rest its claims to respect on the fancied politeness and gentility of its earlier generations of students.

Notwithstanding the fervour and genuine enthusiasm with which he descants on the loveliness of her venerable aspect, and the vigour of her glorious oldness, there is reason to suspect that such an undergraduate would fail to discern much poetic grace or sweetness in his idolized Alma Mater, if she were put before him under the precise circumstances of her saucy girlhood or first womanly years. If he could journey backwards some six and more centuries into the past, and take a peep at his benignant mother, labouring under adverse circumstances, holding no regular and unbroken intercourse with the nobles of the land, possessing scarcely the germ of those material resources which contribute so largely to her present influence, owning scarce a stone of the architectural creations to which she has for many a day been so largely indebted for her external attractiveness, and doing rough work in rude times by homely means, — he would be less disposed to fall upon his knee and sue for her blessing or for leave

to kiss her hand, than to repudiate his relationship with so boisterous and unrefined a progenitor.

For, to clothe truth in an Irishism, Alma Mater's girlhood was an affair of the middle age, and, whilst enjoying a full share of mediæval robustness, it was not devoid of the harsher and more repulsive qualities of mediævalism. On attaining maturity she was no creature of delicate outlines and patrician mien, no stately muse with thoughtful eyes, no queen of fashion enthroned amongst courtiers; but a stoutly-built, energetic woman, with broad shoulders and a thick neck, clad in homespun, ominously muscular about the arms, and well pleased to govern her prodigious family of riotous boys on principles that had come to her from that grandest and oldest of all academic mothers, the ancient lady who lived in a shoe, and periodically asserted her maternal authority by subjecting a numerous progeny to stripes and meagre diet.

Under ordinary circumstances, when famine had the good taste to keep away from the land, the Oxford scholars—alike the little boys in the grammar-halls, and the older inmates who were up to all kinds of sophistical absurdities—had sufficient rations of wholesome food. In every academic generation, the roll of licensed halls doubtless comprised some establishments of the true Dotheboys

type,—places where young children were taken in and done for in a fashion that raised domestic parsimony to the rank of a fine art, and enriched the Squeerses of feudal society at the expense of their young friends from distant provinces. But such houses were few; and so long as meat and malt liquor, oatmeal and coarse flour, were plentiful in the High Street on market days, I doubt not that the tables of the boarding-schools yielded a sufficiency of nutriment to the lads who fed at them. It often happened, however, that supplies were deficient and prices correspondingly high; whereupon riots sometimes arose at the seat of learning—conflicts between the provision-dealers of the city and the knowledge-seekers of the schools, in which the latter fought with a terrible vindictiveness, equally significant of their ignorance of political economy and their familiar acquaintance with pangs of hunger. Nor in seasons of abundance was the ordinary fare of an Oxonian commendable for aught but sufficiency and wholesomeness.

The gruel of the inns was thick, and made of milk as well as water, but careless cooking too often gave it the burnt flavour which roused the discontent and disgust of its consumers. The loaves of wheaten or pulse bread were sometimes so dark throughout, that it was not always easy to say at a glance whether the crust had been charred in the

oven. The meat served up in joints, or stews, or puddings, was the meat of the period,—cut from beasts produced and raised the Lord knows where and how, and in the winter months so salt that it skinned the eater's gums; it had a toughness for the parallel of which the nineteenth-century Englishman must bring his teeth in contact with the bovine tissue of the prairie herds of South America. Of such beef a pennyworth was apportioned to each mess of those poor Cantabrigians, of whose labours and privations Thomas Lever spoke with quaintly expressed pathos from the Paul's Cross pulpit, in the middle of the sixteenth century, when he said, 'There be divers there, which ryse daylye betwyxte four and fyve of the clocke in the mornynge, and from fyve untyll syxe of the clocke, use common prayer wyth an exhortacyon of God's worde in a common chappell, and from syxe unto ten of the clocke use ever eyther pryvate study or commune lectures. At ten of the clocke they go to dynner, whereas they be contente wyth a penye pyece of byefe amongst iiii, hauinge a fewe porage made of the brothe of the same byefe, wyth salt and otemell and nothynge els. After this slender dinner they be either teachynge or learnynge untyll v of the clocke in the eveninge, when as they have a supper not much better then theyr dyner.' From the teacher's tone it is clear

that a penny bought no large piece of beef in Edward the Sixth's days; but I am disposed to think a farthing's worth of such meat, bargained and paid for in accordance with relative values of money and ox-flesh in the sixteenth century, would be quite enough for any fastidious Oxonian of the present generation, before extreme hunger had imparted sharpness to his appetite and robustness to his stomach.

Though the average meat of commerce was tough under the Tudors, it certainly was not more tender under the Plantagenets; nor is there any reason to suppose that university students in the sixteenth fared less hardly than persons of their degree in the thirteenth century. On the contrary, it is certain that the mode of life, alike at Oxford and Cambridge, became less severe and more comfortable—I may not say luxurious, for of luxury the colleges of old time knew little—in proportion as the schools grew in influence, and domestic life laid aside its pristine hardness and austerity. But long after the development of the collegiate system the ordinary diet of university scholars was not greatly superior to the average fare of thrifty husbandmen or prosperous artisans.

Even so late as Henry the Eighth's time, though equal if not superior to the customary diet of farmers and parochial priests, Oxford fare was so notably

inferior to that of the inns of court—*i. e.* the colleges where the sons of the aristocracy were trained and fed with sumptuousness proper to their degree, and even to the fare of the inns of Chancery, in which the inns-of-court men received their preparatory education—that for a gentleman to adopt openly the university diet for daily use was tantamount to a declaration of his intention to live with stringent economy. 'But my counsel is,' said Sir Thomas More to his children after his fall, 'that we fall not to the lowest fare first; we will not therefore descend to Oxford fare, nor to the fare of New Inn, but we will begin with Lincoln's-Inn diet, where many right worshipful men, of great account and good years, do live full well; which, if we find ourselves the first year not able to maintain, then will in the next year come down to Oxford fare, where many great, learned, and ancient fathers and doctors are continually conversant.' The fallen Chancellor had himself made trial of each of the three modes of living; but though he looked forward cheerfully to returning to the cheapest of the three, and even to carrying the bag and wallet of a licensed beggar, the university fare of which he spoke greatly surpassed in delicacy and richness the victuals of first dignitaries of Chaucer's Oxford.

Nor would Young Oxford of to-day, on being suddenly removed to Oxford of the feudal centuries,

conceive stronger distaste for the food and drink put before him than for the other incidents of residence in a principal's inn, and especially for the mates with whom he would be required to live in close familiarity. It would be regarded as a matter of course that he should share a small, musty bedroom with four or five companions; and unless he should be prepared to pay highly for exceptional comforts—to be, in fact, a collegiate parlour-boarder, or, as he is now-a-days termed, gentleman commoner—he would be expected to sleep in the same bed, as well as the same room, with the irregularly washing hobbledehoys. The common mattress would be stuffed with straw, and its occupants in co-partnership, during the freezing nights of sharp winters, would keep each other unequally warm by huddling together under a single woollen rug. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that our fastidious young friend's first night in Dotheboys' Hall would not be one of refreshing slumber, and that, on emerging from his fetid garret at break of day, he would realize the feelings with which the amateur casual of notorious experiences came forth from his ward after having undergone the most repulsive part of his self-imposed punishment.

Prudence and the self-command begotten by high civilization would perhaps enable him to disguise from his mates the feelings roused in his agitated

breast by their uncouthness and humble aspect; but in his heart he would rate them as 'an awful lot of cads.' Nor, when the facts of the case and the conventional signification of the opprobrious words are borne in mind, can it be denied that such a severe judgment would be altogether unwarrantable; for the students of feudal Oxford were strongly and almost universally marked by the peculiarities which fastidious and luxuriously nurtured young men of our own time hold in strong detestation. Here and there amongst them might be seen lads of gentle air and proud carriage, whose personal endowments indicated their honourable extraction; but at a glance the polite observer saw that the majority of the undergraduates were of the social kind to which he did not belong. Sprung from the commonalty of a period when the outward distinctions of gentle and simple were obtrusively conspicuous, the academic striplings—strangely different from the aristocratic pupils of the London law colleges—proclaimed the humility of their origin and condition by look, garb, manner, voice. Their intonations were broadly provincial; they had the stooping, cap-in-hand air of human creatures trained and eager to show servile deference to their betters; and even the richer of them—those who could boast of substantial yeomen for their sires, and never had occasion to beg an alms in the name of Christian learning or borrow a few groats from a benefactor's

chest—were clad in habiliments that roused the insolent curiosity or disdainful mirth of foppish Templars. In the dressing of their hair and the trimming of their beards (for the older of them sometimes had beards) they contrived to be so oddly out of rule as to appear grotesquely defiant of the decrees of fashion. In hot weather they bathed in the Isis for the sake of coolness, but in the cold seasons they avoided the external use of water. They were not remarkable for the freshness of their interior clothing; and I have grounds for saying that any sophist who had been particular to keep his finger-nails clean would have been derided in the schools or the parvise by his fellow-artists for being over-nice in corporeal trivialities.

Seldom possessing means in excess of their actual necessities, and in a considerable proportion of cases unable to pay for their sustenance and instruction in the cheaper inns without the help of charity, the Oxonians of old time had no superfluous cash to spend on diversions. Unlike the students of the London law colleges, who excelled in dancing and knightly sports, and spent much of their abundant pocket-money and leisure in cultivating the graceful arts and courtly accomplishments, whence they and their houses derived their distinctive reputation of courtliness, Oxonians of the ordinary kind patronised no costlier sports than pugilism, archery,

and pitch-bar, and would have incurred sharp punishment had they frequented the schools of dancing-masters, or affected the humours of aristocracy. Those of them who came to the university from distant parts of the kingdom, and had fairly prosperous parents, were wont to ride to and fro between their homes and the university on the little nags which the horse-jobbers of the period provided for the convenience of scholars shortly before the opening and ending of term. But whilst many a scholar never threw leg across one of those cheap ponies, but made his way from school to his father's roof on foot, it is certain that no class of mediæval Oxonians indulged habitually in horse-exercise.

No doubt the boys had their live pets—their pigeons and tiny singing birds, their rabbits and guinea-pigs, in rare cases their toy-dogs and parrots; but it never occurred even to the parlour-boarders of the costlier inns to keep saddle-horses and blood-hounds. Now and then the more lawless of the students broke bounds, and in defiance of stern tutors and sanguinary forest-laws, made poaching excursions in the glades of Woodstock, and shot wild deer at Nuneham or Stanton; but such predatory and perilous excesses were of rare occurrence, and none save the most desperate of academic black sheep took part in them. During term the Oxford scholar of the strictly feudal period was a peripatetic

and houndless being.* He had his cheap athletic games on the Beaumont, but he little imagined that the day would come when Alma Mater's younger children, besides having horses and big dogs—a fashion that first became general in the university after Charles the Second's restoration—would keep packs of hounds, maintain flat-races and steeple-chases, and turn out troops of horsemen for every drag-run, and for the meets of the nearest hunting establishments. It makes one smile to imagine the mingled ire and contempt with which any of the ancient Oxonian schoolmasters would have derided a prediction that in the distant future a considerable proportion of the Oxford scholars would habitually ride with hounds, that it would be no unusual thing for an undergraduate to pay the year's rent of a valuable farm for a hunter, and that a class of tradesmen would spring up who would subsist by letting hacks to undergraduates neither wealthy nor reckless enough to make themselves the owners of saddle-horses.

CHAPTER VI.

ON LEARNING, AND CERTAIN INCENTIVES TO IT.

THOUGH the dignity of the feudal scholar's life may be affected prejudicially in the opinion of some of my readers by the statement, the obligations of the historic office compel me to declare that the discipline by which the ancient Oxonian pedagogues strengthened the powers and corrected the failings of their pupils, comprised a liberal use of means that have of late sunk into general disrepute. Under the Norman and Plantagenet sovereigns — ay, and under dynasties still nearer this polite and merciful century — the philosophic teacher who, in the heat of professional endeavour, beat his pupil to death with an oaken cudgel was neither rewarded with a term of penal servitude, nor even held up to public opprobrium. On the contrary, whilst his least friendly critics deemed him guilty of nothing worse than an excess of honest enthusiasm, he was regarded by the multitude less as a murderer than as a valiant soldier who had slain an enemy in fair fight.

Of the various means for rousing scholarly ambition known to their profession, the mediæval schoolmasters relied chiefly on the stick. Or, to use precise terms on so grave and delicate a subject, they relied confidently on two species of stick—the one a spoon-like instrument, used to batter and blister the palms of lethargic pupils; the other, a simple, but ingenious combination of nine slender sprays of wood (each spray in honour of one of the Nine Muses), brought into close juxtaposition, and firmly bound together with wax-thread at one end, and in the opposite direction expanding with a kind of fan-like extensiveness which, by reminding beholders of the cooling properties of the fan, suggested with cruel irony the warming faculty of the expanding twigs. The former of these scorching contrivances the teacher employed in taking official note of trivial delinquencies, and in imparting a salutary briskness to the atmosphere of his school-room with the smallest possible amount of trouble to himself. For incidental fillips, casual reminders, and passing intimations that things were to be kept lively, the ferule was the thing. But when the instructor was bent on rendering an important service to his class and the interests of learning, he had recourse to the more complicated and perishable implement, and achieved his purpose with proper effect.

I have authority for the statement that peccant

scholars, especially the little Oxonians of the junior grammar-classes who had not acquired the stoical air and method of taking things without emotion, sometimes squealed horribly under the blows of the flagrant besom, laid on by the strong arm of an operator, with a good heart in his work. It is, moreover, matter for record, that in the summer terms, when Alma Mater was at full work with her exercises and disputations, and was bestirring herself with more than ordinary zeal to do her duty by her children, the unlearned citizens and other loafers of Oxford used to congregate beneath the open windows and partially closed doors of the little academies in School Street, for the somewhat malicious satisfaction which they experienced in hearing the whistle of stripes and the cries of sufferers. How prominent a part this primitive method for making young people take to their books played in the scholastic system of our ancestors, may be inferred from the fact that, so late as the middle of the fifteenth century, and doubtless much later, when scholars and bachelors in grammar received licenses to teach grammar within the limits of the university, the chancellor of the schools or his deputy, officiating in the Convocation house in the presence of the whole university, gave to each of the licensed teachers, together with his license, a ferula and a birch. An old order of the academic parliament, noticed by An-

tony Wood, requires that all grammar-masters should 'be obedient to the Masters of Arts, who should be appointed by the Chancellor to oversee and visit the grammar-schools, to the end that the Masters of them should duly instruct and chastise their scholars, and see what things were defective in them.' But for the present enough has been said on an interesting topic to which I shall return in a later chapter, that will bring the matter nearer home to Oxonians of the present day, and may haply cause them to tremble in their shoes for the possible consequences of their own shortcomings.

Of the learning thus imparted to young people by primitive, not to say absurd means, I could say a great deal, but nothing calculated to please those who delight to put mediæval Oxford on nineteenth-century stilts, and to represent that she overflowed with profound philosophy, when she was merely doing prosaic work in an honest and intelligible, though homely, fashion. To those clever and learned gentlemen—(and I am not speaking ironically of their sagacity and erudition, which very likely exceed my own)—who maintain that the old Oxonian schoolmasters cherished a sublime ideal of the educator's functions, that they declined to comply with what are now-a-days derided by sciolists as utilitarian considerations, and that they aimed rather at the general elevation of the pupil's nature and the

harmonious development of his faculties, I can say scarcely anything about the educational system of the earlier Oxford teachers, which will not appear perverse and absolutely erroneous. For to me nothing is clearer in the social story of our dark period, than that Oxford was at the outset of her career the exact mediæval equivalent of our nineteenth-century middle-class schools, and that her chief object was to produce an adequate supply of persons possessing a sufficiency of the particular kinds of knowledge that were needed for the carrying on the prosaic affairs of a work-a-day world. Yet further: I have no doubt that if Oxford had not been thus 'meanly utilitarian' in her earlier years, she would not have prospered, or given to existing society the magnificent institutions which an unworthy minority of her sons would fain use as a mere party platform, whereon to extol the past at the expense of the present, and to rail at the sordid aims of modern life.

It is not for the pleasure of indulging in fanciful conjecture, but rather to assist readers in acquiring a true knowledge of our national life, that I suggest that Oxford's original success was mainly due to the practical ability with which she satisfied certain social needs arising out of the Norman Conquest. From the same movement which made England a country of two nations, and transferring the owner-

ship of the greater part of her soil from the conquered to the victorious aristocracy gave French rulers to English populace, there sprang an urgent demand for educated business-agents who could mediate in the common affairs of life between a nobility and a multitude, each of which two elements of the commonwealth spoke a language not understood by the other. Our experiences in India assist in showing us the necessity for such a class of official intercommunicators between the French nobles, who could seldom speak ten words of English, and their English tenants, who could rarely speak ten words of French. Every baron within the limits of his jurisdiction, every knight on his subordinate estate, every Norman gentleman holding a manorial lordship and a tract of irregularly cultivated or comparatively unreclaimed soil, continually needed the services of a factor who could speak English and French, explain Saxon ways to the Norman mind, and, enlightening the Norman mind upon Saxon ways, could save the social machine from coming to a dead-lock. Disdaining mental, no less than bodily labour, with the coarse insolence of barbaric power, the Norman nobles could not condescend to acquire the language of the enslaved people; but no long time elapsed before the men of the fallen nation saw their advantage in rendering themselves serviceable to their foreign masters by the acquisition of certain

kinds of learning which, had it not been for the French intruders, they would not have troubled themselves to acquire.

To train the English boys who wished to take service of trust under the French nobles, or otherwise make profit out of the increased demand for men combining education with energy, schoolmasters appeared in other towns besides Oxford; but owing to causes of which enough has been said for the purposes of this omniscient work, the teachers on the shores of the Isis surpassed all their competitors, and the seminary of their formation, from being only a local influence, grew to be a national power. Before the gradual absorption of the Norman intruders into the national stock had been effected, the secular clergy had selected as their chief nursery the aggregation of schools which had outlived the special circumstances that called it into existence, and was firmly rooted in the confidence and affections of the humble people.

The training which Oxford for many a day gave to her pupils was as strictly practical, and closely pointed to the immediate uses for which her instructions were required, as the training of any commercial academy to be found at the present date betwixt Highgate Rise and Clapham Junction. She gave her best energies to teaching them grammar, an art no less useful in common affairs than beneficial to

the mind; though some of us contrive to get on very comfortably without a very accurate knowledge of its rules. She taught them to write clear, firm, legible hands, so that no employer should find them inefficient penmen. And she drilled them thoroughly in the primary rules of arithmetic; so that they were clever in casting up figures, and could be trusted to manage the accounts of great estates. French she taught them for obvious reasons, of which no more need be said. She gave them no smattering of Greek, because a slight knowledge of that classic tongue was not a marketable commodity, as it became on the revival of letters consequent on religious commotion and the discovery of printing; as it still remains, partly through the genuine scholarly tastes of a very limited number of Englishmen, but mainly from pedantic fashion arising from the direction which countless pedants of past time gave to the national studies. But Oxford taught her boys Latin —not out of compliment to a dead people, or from any notion that its literature was peculiarly calculated to endow the student with intellectual vigour and moral dignity; but because, though dead in one sense, Latin was eminently a living tongue, and a knowledge of it was highly to be desired by every man of culture who designed to turn his knowledge to commercial account. French was the language in which the lawyers pleaded in

court; but the records of the tribunals were kept in Latin, which had, moreover, a peculiar claim to rank amongst living languages in the fact that the learned of all the western nations used it as a common tongue. Until he had acquired a certain proficiency in Latin, no aspirant to livelihood by means of letters was qualified to act as a nobleman's secretary, or even as clerk to a commercial corporation. Under these circumstances Oxford put Latin amongst the studies of a strictly practical training, just as Mr. Jabez Flourish, M.C.P., of the Peckham Commercial Academy, regards a knowledge of French as a necessary feature of a sound commercial education. With respect to other subjects which she taught to the best of her ability she was no less utilitarian. Whatever knowledge, or so-called knowledge, men required for actual use in the path of life, they could procure in her schools. She taught the Bible, and the Church's deductions from its words, to students who meant to enter religion. That her sons might be armed to fight in the grand battle against disease—a battle, by the way, which the best doctors of the present day say has only just begun—she instructed them about maladies and the means for their cure. She had lecturers on the vain delusions of astrology, who distributed their teachings in the belief that they would result in the most useful and beneficial of all conceivable discoveries—an in-

vention that would convert the baser metals into gold.

On the one field, where she laboured from a desire to raise the pupil's intellectual efficiency without any respect to the special career for which he was designed, she toiled to less good, and committed a larger number of absurdities, than in any other section of scholastic enterprise. It was an evil day for her when she gave her brains and conscience for a while into the keeping of fantastic logicians, whom she allowed to train and elevate her children by those processes of barren word-splitting which have rendered sophistry a by-word for learned foolishness and vain disputation. Save that the sophister could earn fees by training others in his pernicious art, so long as pedantry sustained it in popular esteem, no material good ever came to the artist from his mastery of sophistical tricks. But for many a day scholastic disputants, alike simple and subtle, contrived to persuade themselves that sophistry sharpened the wits of its practitioners; and was all the more to be commended because, whilst contributing nothing to social convenience, it aimed only at imparting vigour and clearness to the mental faculties.

From the little that has come down to us of the doings of the pragmatical sophisters, one need not hesitate to declare that their exercises never sharp-

ened any human wits which could not have been ground to a finer edge by less vexatious processes. On the other hand, it is no less certain that sophistry brought many a fairly intelligent youngster to intellectual shipwreck, by training him to rate words above thought, by muddling his brain with super-subtle jargon, and by infusing him with insolent confidence in his own sagacity. Grim stories have been preserved of the doleful endings to which the artificial talkers were brought by the arrogance of sophistical self-sufficiency; and though we may decline to accept the narratives literally, I doubt not that they truthfully indicate the calamitous results of the vicious exercises. Something of solemn truth is discernible in the quaint anecdote of Simon Tournay's humiliation, who was struck dumb for boasting that he could argue with equal effect in the support and for the overthrow of sacred verities.

Of Silo, the sophister of Paris—whence, by the way, the sophistical madness is said to have been imported to Oxford—a grotesquely revolting tale is recorded by Jacobus Januensis. From one of his wealthiest and most subtle pupils, who lay at the point of death, this Silo, whom the habit of playing with words had infused with disbelief in everything but his own cleverness, extorted a promise that after death he would, if possible, escape from purgatory, and, returning to his own terrestrial quarters, make

a statement of how the next world went with him. True to his word, although a master of sophistry, the disputant shortly after his death reappeared in Silo's chamber, wearing his academical robes, even as a martial ghost would have been sure to wear armour, and having his sophister's hood stuffed with sophistical notes and lined with fire. Nothing alarmed, or else impudently disguising his terror, Silo was making light of his pupil's purgatorial doom, when a spark from the papers in the burning hood fell upon his outstretched hand and filled him with indescribable torture. 'Your pain is a trifle,' observed the ghost, looking reproachfully at his former master, 'I am burning in that way all over.' Whereto Silo, seeing the truth, and speaking it at least for once in his life, exclaimed, 'Is it so? Then I know now what to do.' The biographer adds, 'Whereupon, resolving to leave the world and enter himself into religion, he called his scholars about him, took his leave of them, and dismissed them with these verses,—

> 'Linquo coax ranis, cras corvis, vanaque vanis,
> Ad Logicam pergo, quæ mortis non timet ergo!'

Whence, it appears, there was hope for the sophister who repented of his sophistry and returned to the ways of sober thought and sound reason.

CHAPTER VII.

COLLEGES AND HALLS.

It is usual to speak of the collegiate system as a device of comparatively recent origin, that had its commencement in a time when the schools had been famous for many a day, but in the course of a comparatively few generations had so completely overpowered the non-collegiate influence of the university, that scholars wishing to study in the university could not achieve their purpose, until they had entered their names on the roll of an academic house and thereby rendered themselves 'collegians.' Nor can this general statement be charged with important misrepresentation, so long as it is borne in mind that what is now-a-days designated the collegiate system sprang into existence before the oldest of Oxford's existing colleges, which are sometimes erroneously accused of being accountable for the academic revolution, of which they were in fact a product rather than a cause.

Now that the borage has sunk two inches towards the bottom of the flagon, the drinkers of this cup do

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not need to be told that Oxford's collegiate system, far older than the college which Alfred was supposed to have founded, had its commencement in the mediæval boarding academies, and became the dominant power of the university when the 'inmates' defeated the 'chums' in the earlier half of the fifteenth century,—a date when, though several of the noblest and most famous of Oxford's present collegiate foundations had not only acquired renown, but had gained the air and aroma of antiquity, the numerous inns, or aulæ still constituted by far the most important part of the resources and strength of the university. The success of the old inns decided the direction and forms of the domestic development of the university. By the expulsion of the chamberdekyns, the university declared that henceforth she would be strictly collegiate, would entertain no students who omitted to join themselves to a recognised 'domus,' would be in fact, so far as her pupils were concerned, nothing more than the controlling power of a learned population divided amongst, and usually dwelling beneath, the roofs of inns, or aulæ.

Upon this declaration of purpose, she assumed a constitution which in many particulars reminds us of the constitution of the United States of America. The university became the central government representing the united brotherhoods to the outside world, and giving expression to the wishes of the

majority of persons entitled to a voice in academic politics, but not presuming to interfere in the internal arrangements and private affairs of the separate foundations, that resembled sovereign states in being endowed with the rights of internal self-government. The endowed inns, and the altogether self-dependent halls, stood to the university somewhat in the same relation that territories hold to the central and overshadowing power of the American republic.

That the university did not insist with invariable resoluteness and consistency on the edicts, by which she extinguished the 'chums,' is a matter of no moment in an inquiry after the origin of her collegiate system. Evidence may be gleaned from Oxonian statutes and annals, that in times of lax discipline, arising from tutorial unworthiness or social disturbance, students neglected to join halls with the promptitude required by university law, or were suffered in considerable numbers to occupy chambers outside the walls of the academic houses, in violation or disregard of the edict against chamberdekyns. But the cases in which the absolute rules of the collegiate system were relaxed or treated with disobedience affect nothing against the statement that the system came into full force in the earlier part of the fifteenth century.

To appreciate how little influence the colleges had

in creating the so-called collegiate system, the reader should observe that, though several colleges were in existence, and had obtained great power in the university, when the chamberdekyns were suppressed, they were important rather as the homes of learned men and senior scholars than as teaching establishments for academic youth. He should also recall the circumstances under which, and the ends for which, the colleges were established.

Hitherto I have only spoken of the halls or inns, the sole or main business of which was the tutorial entertainment of pupils. The occasion has now arrived for speaking of another class of houses, which, instead of being boarding-schools, were dwellings maintained on the club-principle by masters and other graduates, who lived at Oxford for the sake of scholastic employment or congenial society. The houses thus occupied by academic seniors were designated inns, hotels, aulæ, like all other dwellings set apart for companies of scholars. Of the constitution of the inns of adult students, *i.e.*, students no longer pupils, but little is known, save that they were voluntary associations, and especially liable to decay and dissolution, from their lack of endowment, and also of revenue arising from the lucrative business of entertaining undergraduates.

The early collegiate founders appear to have aimed at the establishment of houses that should

supply the place of these perishable and defective inns. Certain it is that in their origin the early colleges were not designed to be educational establishments for the general youth of the country. Whilst the flourishing schools of boarders appeared sufficient for the needs of the ordinary youngsters of the university, the college was designed as a tranquil home for scholarly men requiring a retreat in which to pass their lives in religion and meditation, or to prosecute their academic studies for a prolonged period, under conditions of security and material comfort. It was contemplated that the younger members of a college would receive irregular instruction from their seniors, but would derive their chief culture from their class-rooms in School Street, just as though they were 'inmates' paying for their subsistence in a principal's hall, instead of being collegians with free quarters and gratuitous board. And even when the principal of a college was authorised or required to watch the intellectual progress of its junior members, whilst they were qualifying for degrees, he was not expected to turn his benefactor's 'domus' into an academy for the instruction of youth not dependent on its foundation. On the contrary, the statutes of University College expressly forbade the establishment of a school within its walls, unless the fellows

consented to the change. The college fellow was not necessarily a teacher, neither was the college necessarily a school.

The earlier colleges, moreover, were not on their first establishment such capacious and imposing residences as they became in the course of centuries; and for several generations their residents were of no numerical importance. University College had its beginning in a mean house, provided for four masters; and before it could boast of possessing a quadrangle the chamberdekyns had been banished the university. Walter Merton's original foundation was for twenty scholars and three chaplains. Walter Stapledon's college was for a rector and thirteen fellows. Oriel was originally constructed for eleven foundationers; Queen's for a provost and thirteen fellows. William of Wykeham's superb 'domus'—marvellous in the fourteenth and admirable in the present century for its magnitude and grandeur—was built for a warden, seventy fellows and scholars, ten chaplains, three clerks, and sixteen choristers—in all one hundred foundationers—a smaller number of individuals than the average population of a small college of these days. The smallness of the proportion which the collegians bore to the 'inmates' at any time prior to the suppression of the chamberdekyns utterly discredits the prevailing notion that

the colleges were mainly instrumental in completing the triumph of a system which would be more justly termed aularian than collegiate.

The fundamental difference between an endowed inn and a college lay in the distinct corporate existence of the latter association, and its right to manage its private affairs without reference to the supreme governing power of the university; and at a glance it is easy to see how this important difference placed the colleges at a great advantage over the inns, more especially over the unendowed inns, so far as their chances of enjoying permanent prosperity were concerned. With endowments, consisting chiefly of real estate, the colleges shared in the favourable circumstances of the territorial aristocracy, and, without contributing anything directly to the affluence of the commonwealth, were enriched by every improvement of agriculture or other social change that raised the value and productiveness of the soil. Whilst even the richest of the academic 'aulæ' were principally dependent on the profits of educational industry, and were liable to all the depressing and capricious influences which impart a kind of speculative insecurity and hazardousness to the commercial side of the scholastic vocation, permanency was ensured to the colleges by estates which yielded buoyant revenues; and it was not long ere the great unendowed boarding-schools of the university

foresaw that their prosperity, arising from an abundant supply of pupils, would disappear before the flourishing corporations that bestirred themselves more and more in educational enterprise as the generations followed one another.

Though the first colleges were not designed to be teaching institutions for the general body of academic youth, each of them, at an early date of its existence, exhibited a salutary inclination to participate in the emoluments arising from the scholastic activity of the seat of learning. The provision of a collegiate fellow consisted chiefly of allowances —his chamber, rations of food, and other like perquisites; but of cash he derived nothing more than a narrow stipend from his founder's munificence. Existing in idleness, he had the means of life; but, by turning his learning and abundant leisure to account in the educational market, it was obvious to him that he might acquire ample funds for the purchase of books, the achievement of benevolent ambitions, and the acquirement of numerous luxuries which lay beyond the means of a needy student, and yet within the circle of a philosophic scholar's natural desires. Obvious also was it to every fraternity of collegiate fellows that, by using their rent-free house for the entertainment of learners, they would compete under highly favourable circumstances with principals who had the same high rents to pay for their

inns, whether scholars were few or numerous. The small college, that went in for the school-keeping business, had a prospect of doing much good, and rendering itself a highly important 'domus' in the course of a few generations.

The collegians therefore, alike in their individual and collective capacities, saw their advantage in entering on commercial rivalry with the inns. The colleges became boarding-schools, and in course of years achieved their aim, to the annoyance, impoverishment, and eventual extinction of almost all of the hotels. Decade after decade, they grew in popularity and riches, and, stimulated by success to fresh exertions, enlarged their buildings for the convenience of the students, who deserted the old, and frequented the new boarding-houses; and whilst the collegians flourished, the halls languished, until they gradually died out, when the nutriment of trade had been thoroughly sucked away from them. Many of those dwellings which for ages had been the homes of scholars fell into the hands of citizens, who converted them into shops. Several of them were from time to time absorbed by the growing colleges, or constituted part of the original foundations of corporate brotherhoods. A few that possessed unusually large endowments, or were enabled by exceptional circumstances to persevere doggedly in resistance to overpowering adversaries, survive to this day as useful

seminaries and interesting memorials of the ancient constitution of the university. But to the great majority of the inns total extinction was the result of collegiate development. It was a struggle between two kinds of institutions—a struggle on the one hand for life and on the other for power; and, as often happens in such contests, the side which battled for hard life succumbed to the side that strove only for supremacy. *Cæteris paribus*, wealth naturally told much in favour of the colleges. The providence that favours great battalions more than small regiments, smiled on the colleges that, instead of having exacting landlords, had fat farms and profitable tenants. The unendowed establishments fell before the subsidized societies.

Of the eighteen colleges of Oxford, seven arose in a period of something more than one hundred years,—a period lying midway between the Heptarchy and living England. William of Durham died in 1249, and thirty years after his death the original members of his foundation received their first statutes. It is impossible to name the precise date at which University College was established; but all impartial writers concur in giving it the honour of priority over the other corporate houses. But Merton and Balliol are so nearly of the same age as University College, that in the historic retrospect the three institutions appear to come into existence

simultaneously. The exact particulars of Balliol's establishment are surrounded with uncertainty, but the framers of the *University Calendar*, erring, if at all, in the direction of King Alfred, put the date of its actual foundation between the years 1263 and 1268, six years after which latter date Walter de Merton moved his college from Maldon, in Surrey, to Oxford. Betwixt the members of these three houses angry disputes have in past days arisen concerning their relative antiquity,—disputes that are not likely to be revived by men who shrink from barren contentions concerning the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. After the creation of these fraternities considerably more than a full generation elapsed before Walter de Stapledon, Bishop of Exeter, planted his richly endowed hall on the site where, after acquiring Edmund Stafford's endowment in the commencement of the fifteenth century, it became Exeter College, and continued to sustain its honourable reputation. Though it did not change its name from Stapledon Hall to Exeter College till some eighty or ninety years had elapsed after its relinquishment of Hart Hall, the collegiate existence of Walter de Stapledon's brotherhood may be fairly computed as beginning in the second decade of the fourteenth century. Then came Walter de Brome's College (Oriel), founded shortly after Staple-

don Hall had moved across the Broad Street. Next appeared Queen's College, instituted in or near 1340, and named after Edward the Third's queen. Of the Oxonian colleges of the first period, the roll closes with William of Wykeham's superb structure, the royal patent for the foundation of which munificent gift to learning bears date June 30, 1379, something more than six years before the day which saw the warden, fellows, and other members of the recently founded society march in solemn procession into their new college,—which may be regarded as the last of the first series of collegiate foundations; a series consisting of University, Merton, Balliol, Exeter, Oriel, Queen's, and New, the most recent of which societies can boast almost five centuries of age.

Nearly fifty years elapsed after William of Wykeham had received his charter for the construction and establishment of New College, before Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, created the house that bears the name of his diocese and may be looked upon as the earliest of another group of collegiate esfablishments,—the colleges planted in an epoch of successive troubles, which renders the beneficence of their founders all the more remarkable and praiseworthy. Beginning in an early year of Henry the Sixth's luckless reign and closing with the Field of the Cloth of Gold, this second period

of collegiate development was the time of Chichele and Waynfleet, and saw All Souls, Magdalen, Brasenose, and Corpus Christi added to the increasing roll of academic corporations.

Christ Church followed close upon the heels of Corpus, — so very close, that to those who regard it as Wolsey's legacy to scholarship, it may appear that the college, on which Henry the Eighth conferred more of injury than benefit, should be placed as the latest of the colleges reared before our rupture with the Papacy. But though the most populous and aristocratic of the Oxonian colleges has strong claims to be rated amongst pre-Reformation institutions, it was in so peculiar a manner the offspring and nurseling of religious commotion, and was so indisputably re-founded by Henry after the Cardinal's fall, and the first momentous occurrences in the long drama of the Reformation, that I prefer to speak of it as one of the scholastic houses raised during the forty years of political strifes and spiritual embroilments, which lie between the Catholic and Protestant periods of our national story. Together with it may be grouped Trinity and St. John's, founded during Mary's ghastly days of Catholic reaction and sanguinary persecution, and Jesus—the college that came into being when Elizabeth, after several years of perilous and energetic rule, was still in the fiercest of

her fight with papal conspirators, but, notwithstanding the urgency of the numerous difficulties that encompassed her, had given the Protestant cause a substantial though unquiet security.

The three youngest colleges of the university —Wadham, Pembroke, and Worcester—make up another group of academic foundations, having no connexion with pre-Reformation interests, and belonging altogether to the strictly Protestant part of our annals. Just as there are considerations which would justify the reader in placing Christ Church amongst colleges of the second period, there are obvious reasons which may decide him to amend this classification by putting Jesus amongst the academic houses of the fourth period. Of course the reader will not fail to see that no stern historic necessity requires him to accept without modification, or altogether reject the somewhat arbitrary demarcations of what is nothing more than a convenient scheme for enabling him to realize the progress of collegiate development at Oxford. But the inquirer, who wishes to keep in clear view the steps by which the university of feudal time grew into what she is now, and for many a day has been, will do much for the accomplishment of his aim, by breaking up the doings of the old college-builders into groups, and fixing in his mind some such synopsis as the following :—

COLLEGES OF THE FIRST PERIOD.

First Pre-Reformation Group.

NAME.	DATE OF FOUNDATION.
1. University	Towards the close of Henry III.'s, or at the opening of Edward I.'s, reign.
2. Balliol	
3. Merton	
4. Exeter	1314, temp. Edward II.
5. Oriel	1324–6, temp. Edward II.
6. Queen's	1340, temp. Edward III.
7. New	1379–86, temp. Richard II.

COLLEGES OF THE SECOND PERIOD.

Second Pre-Reformation Group.

1. Lincoln	1427, temp. Henry VI.
2. All Souls'	1437, temp. Henry VI.
3. Magdalen	1457, temp. Henry VI.
4. Brasenose	1509–11, temp. Henry VIII.
5. Corpus Christi	1516, temp. Henry VIII.

COLLEGES OF THE THIRD PERIOD.

Epoch of Politico-Religious Commotion.

1. Christ Church	1525, 1532, 1545, temp. Henry VIII.
2. Trinity College	1554–5, temp. Mary.
3. St. John's College	1555, temp. Mary.
4. Jesus	1571, temp. Elizabeth.

COLLEGES OF THE FOURTH PERIOD.

Protestant Epoch.

1. Wadham	1613, temp. James I.
2. Pembroke	1624, temp. James I.
3. Worcester	1714, temp. Anne.

Of the five halls—St. Mary, Madalen, New Inn, St. Alban, and St. Edmund: houses that survive to remind the nineteenth-century Oxonian of times prior to the predominance of the colleges—the most ancient is St. Edmund, which may indeed claim the honour of being the oldest of the existing academic residences, since it was devoted to the entertainment and culture of youth, just about the time of the establishment of University College, and long before the oldest of the colleges had bestirred themselves in educational enterprise. The other halls are of more recent origin, and, so far as their scholastic usefulness in feudal England is concerned, may be said to have arisen in the period when the corporate brotherhoods were beginning to compete actively with the endowed and unendowed boarding-schools in the teaching trade. That in all social and scholastic respects the existing halls differ in nothing from colleges, whose members receive from Alma Mater no favours which are not distributed with equal liberality to members of halls, it is almost needless to observe. In every particular of opportunity and dignity, Smith of St. Mary Hall is as much a university man as Brown of Christ Church—the special advantages or disadvantages accruing from affiliation in hall or college having no effect on the academic status of its members, so as to exalt them above or place them below the members of other houses. Strange people, how-

ever, may be found in the university as well as in the wider world; and it may be that, out of the depths of Oxonian foolishness, it is possible to draw a gown-wearing nincompoop, who imagines that aularians are subordinate to collegians, and looks compassionately on 'fellows in halls' as creatures of an inferior academic species.

CHAPTER VIII.

STRUCTURAL NEWNESS OF OXFORD.

HAVING discomforted some of my more romantic and thin-skinned Oxonians by showing them that, instead of having its origin in Saxon or British times, their university arose from humble beginnings in days subsequent to the Norman Conquest, it will be my congenial task in the present chapter to worry them still further, by showing that their academic buildings are much less ancient than is generally supposed—indeed, that with the exception of two or three noble structures, and a few remnants of edifices long since destroyed, their Alma Mater has just nothing to boast of in the way of structural antiquity. My nervous and sentimental friends may wince, but they must endure the salutary discipline. Having ascertained the comparative recency of Oxford's schools, they must consent to hear something about the newness of her buildings.

The ordinary visitor arrives at Oxford, under so strong a predisposition to overrate the antiquity of

these edifices, and under the powerful influence of so many misleading exaggerations of the oldness of the place, that, when he has been the round of the university lions, gazing with tender affectionateness on black and crumbling piles, whose architectural beauties are softly visible through the veil which great length of time seems to have thrown over their loveliness, he is apt to reply with supercilious incredulity or disdainful ridicule to the informant who has the hardihood and cruelty to assure him that, in spite of her venerable aspect, Oxford is a new city,—old, no doubt, in comparison with such towns as Liverpool and Brighton, but young in comparison with such places as Newcastle and Chester; and in respect of ancientness, having no more claim to rank with the Northern metropolis than one of Sir John Vanbrugh's mansions has to rank with a Tudor castle.

But on reference to the reliable histories of the university, and to persons acquainted with the particulars of her latest renovations, he learns that to moulder it is no more necessary for a building to grow old, than it is necessary for a man to be an attorney in order that he may be honest. It may cost him a pang to learn that, whilst overflowing with spurious mediævalism and Brummagem antiquity, the seat of learning is scarcely richer than an ordinary cathedral town in the attractions which

antiquarians prize beyond all other charms in places of long-established reputation. But the lesson has its uses. Having discovered that the softness of their material is chiefly accountable for the sombre darkness and continual reparation of the Oxonian buildings, he ceases to gaze with superstitious fondness on stones which, though the combined action of air and water has furrowed and blackened their surface into an appearance of oldness, belong to the order of architectural works that, owing to the rapid perishableness of their substance, decay long ere they have grown old, and may be said to spend their time in assuming a virtue which they do not possess. And having thus freed his mind from the influence of pleasant illusion, and learnt how far easier it is for time to invest the young with the air of oldness than for art to clothe the old with the appearance of youth, he is free to watch with sympathetic intelligence the architectural activity of the successive generations of collegiate renovators who, impelled by collegiate rivalry no less than by prudent care for corporate interests, were restrained by no vicious love of antique stones from renewing their habitations and enlarging their walls.

Nor are the misapprehensions respecting Oxford's claims to structural antiquity prevalent only amongst credulous strangers and incurious undergraduates. Even by those who are aware that the material old-

ness of the university is a thing of appearance and fancy rather than of fact; it is seldom realized how very little of her buildings is of pre-Tudor date, how very much of them is of Stuart creation, and how very considerable a proportion of them arose in Hanoverian time. Let us, with Wood and Ingram for our guides, take a run round and about the university, to see how far the ordinary Oxonian is justified in pluming himself on its richness in old things.

Apart from its colleges and a few specimens of subordinate ecclesiastical architecture, the university has not a single building for which the most partial antiquarian would venture to say more than that it is of respectable age. The ancient class-rooms of School Street have perished utterly, and so also have the schools raised in the middle of the fifteenth century by Thomas Hokenorton, abbot of Oseney. Instead of Hokenorton's inadequate structure, Oxford has the unartistic and dismal pile which she still justly calls the New Schools—a mass of buildings, commenced in the year of Sir Thomas Overbury's murder, and not completed until James the First's constitution was giving way under gluttony and gross drinking. The Sheldonian Theatre was built by the Cavalier schoolmen in the riot of the Restoration. But the university has two conspicuous edifices, which can scarcely be called modern, though they are

very far from being ancient structures—the Divinity School, finished just five years before the accession of Henry the Seventh; and St. Mary's Church, which was built during that monarch's reign on the site of an older church, which had been for many years in a ruinous condition. With the single exception of the Divinity School, completed some years after the Seventh Henry had attained manhood, the University—apart from the colleges and halls resting within her arms—has not a single important building of pro-Tudor date. With the exception of that school, and her church, raised at the end of the fifteenth century, she has not, apart from her scholastic residences, one noteworthy edifice with even the faintest title to the honour of mediæval origin.

Clearly it is in the collegiate buildings that search must be made for the substantial foundations of Oxford's indefinite and romantic repute for structural oldness. In the colleges of the first period we shall come upon whatever buildings she possesses that are more than five hundred years old; in the colleges of the two first periods we shall find whatever structures have stood for more than three hundred and fifty years within her bounds. Of course antiquity is altogether a relative affair. The stripling in the world is regarded as a man of many years by the occupants of a nursery. Stones venerable for age on Ludgate Hill are things of

yesterday when put beside the ruins of the Parthenon. But even the sons of so modern a nation as England fail to detect any strong savour of ancientness in objects, the history of which is covered by three and a half centuries.

Enough has been said to warn the reader that he may not hope to find the colleges so old in structure as in foundation; but until he shall have examined their annals and buildings, he will fail to realize how small a proportion of the collegiate edifices belong to the period in which the corporations originated.

University College, the oldest of the corporations, was not established in the High Street till the middle of the fourteenth century, and yet the present 'domus' is believed to contain no single stone of the dwelling which William of Durham's masters occupied from the date of their removal to the main thoroughfare till the time in the following century when, near upon the suppression of 'the chums,' the college acquired rectangular dignity, by pulling down old habitations and replacing them with a quadrangular structure. The tower over the gate was added in Henry the Eighth's time, and was improved under Elizabeth; but the main parts of the college, if we shut our eyes to renovations and enlargements of still more recent date, is of Stuart creation. More than thirty years

since Dr. Ingram, of Trinity—whose 'Memorials of Oxford' remains the most artistic and complete of the numerous books about the University—lamented that the changes of five centuries had rendered it impossible to identify in Balliol the 'refectory, kitchen, out-houses, and walks,' ascribed by Wood to the Lady Dervorgilla; but the college retains the hall, which Antony believed to be a work of Henry the Sixth's reign, and Dr. Ingram assigned to the latter part of the fourteenth century, a chapel built in Henry the Eighth's time, and in its library some relics of architectural work done between 1431 and 1477. Merton retains its original plan, and is rich in ancient structure; but whilst much of its substance is of Elizabethan and later times, it contains very little of its first fabric. Its gateway and embattled tower were built in Henry the Fifth's reign; its chapel was dedicated in 1424; its hall is said to have been built before the chapel, but the repairs effected in 1540 wrought a great alteration in its internal aspect, and it was so boldly re-arranged and re-edified by Wyatt some seventy years since, 'that,' to use Dr. Ingram's words, 'little more than the dimensions of the original structure can now be ascertained.' The library and the court in which it stands are of the latter part of the fourteenth century; but the first or outer court is of Elizabethan, the larger or inner court of Stuart

date. With the exception of unimportant corners, and odds and ends, that have no effect on the prevailing character of the edifices, Exeter, Oriel, and Queen's, are comparatively recent erections. Due allowance being made for necessary reparations, New College retains a noble display of original buildings, that, after standing for near five hundred years, are the pride of their possessors, and the admiration of all beholders. Lincoln preserves its original design and pieces of its ancient structure. But though Dr. Ingram says it is not strictly true to assert that Chichele's College retains scarcely anything as it was left by the founder, All Souls, so far as the buildings which make up its outward effect are concerned, is a thing of yesterday. It retains a chapel consecrated in 1442; and the buildings of the last century were so contrived that they did not obliterate the older structure; but no one can say that antiquity is a prevailing characteristic of the 'domus.' Like New College, Magdalen is superbly rich in primæval structure, and the loiterer beneath the roofs of its cloisters, chapel, library, and hall, is surrounded by works of the designers and artisans of the fifteenth century. Brasenose, little more than three hundred and fifty years old, retains its old edifice, disguised by Stuart improvements; and Corpus, only a few years younger than Brasenose, whilst preserving much original structure, has been

improved, restored, and enlarged into a thing of Stuart rather than Tudor date.

Hence it appears, that, whilst the university contains amongst her academic buildings scarcely anything of high structural antiquity, she is mainly indebted to three colleges for what specimens she possesses of fairly ancient architecture, in addition to her church and Divinity School of the fifteenth century. Were St. Mary's, the Divinity School, Merton, New, and Magdalen withdrawn from her treasures, she would possess scarcely any large and complete buildings of high interest, if antiquity alone could impart high interest to fine specimens of a noble art.

To state in concise language all the architectural works which the Oxonians, in spite of civil disturbances and the interregnum, pushed forward during the Stuart period, I should require the space of an entire chapter, and should then pass over scores of such small matters as history, no less than law, declines to trouble herself about. At the risk of offending Oxonian mediævalists, I will, however, remind them of a few matters which were done by their Alma Mater and her sons in the seventeenth century. For the rest I refer them to Antony Wood and his reproducers.

Besides witnessing the erection of the Schools and the Bodleian Library, James the First's reign

saw the commencement of Balliol's third chapel; the completion of the great quadrangle at Merton; the erection of a chapel in Exeter; the re-edification of the southern and western sides of the old quadrangle of Oriel; the building of the south quadrangle of Lincoln College; the construction of the third story, with dormer windows, over the original buildings of Brasenose; the entire rebuilding of the hall of Trinity; the erection of Jesus' chapel, and the commencement of the hall of the same college; and the birth of two new colleges, Wadham and Pembroke. No credit is due to the British Solomon for these results of academic activity, though they may help to relieve his reign of some of the obloquy which covers it.

The English sovereign, who made Oxford his refuge and defence in time of trouble, contributed equally to her lustre and impoverishment; but during the earlier part of his misgovernment he saw, without dissatisfaction, a continuance of the architectural activity which quickened the life of the university in his father's days. From an early date of his reign till the outbreak of the civil disturbances, builders and masons bestirred themselves in carrying out or obscuring the original plan of the grand quadrangle and cathedral of Christchurch, —the college, which Henry refounded only to neglect it, and which had been suffered to remain in much the

same state in which Cardinal Wolsey left it throughout the Elizabethan age. In the same reign University College commenced works that were not completed till after the Restoration, when she perfected her smaller quadrangle. One entire wing of that quadrangle was finished within two years of its commencement in 1634; and before the temporary relinquishment of the works, the north side, abutting on the High Street, and the south side, containing the hall and chapel, were almost accomplished. The hall and chapel of Oriel were begun in the year of Hampden's trial, and finished in the very year in which the Parliamentarians and the King's friends had recourse to arms. The hall of Lincoln College is of the same period. The hall of Jesus College was finished at the beginning of the martyr's reign, which also witnessed the opening of the Botanic Garden.

On the return of the Cavaliers at the close of the interregnum, they renewed the architectural labours from which the Rebellion had compelled them to desist. In Christchurch they finished Wolsey's great quadrangle, surmounting it with the Roman balustrade, instead of the pinnacled battlement of its first construction; built Tom Tower; pushed forward the works of the cathedral; created Fell's Buildings; and raised the Long Walk with the rubble and chips of white stone, whence it derived its name of the White

Walk, corrupted into Wide Walk, and then changed into Broad Walk. In University College they continued the improvements that had been partially stayed during the *régime* of saints, under whom, however, the hall of William of Durham's 'domus' had been finished. They repaired, enlarged, and embellished Exeter. At Queen's they maintained the *status quo* until the last decade of the century, when a splendid library was built; a work followed in the next century by the wholesale reconstruction which rendered the college a new thing. Garden Court, New College, was a work of Charles the Second's time. In Brasenose, where the saints had built a new chapel, the Cavaliers completed a new library. At the same period, Trinity raised the north wing and garden front of the new buildings, which were rendered uniform in the following century. The Sheldonian Theatre was raised for academic rejoicings by the restored royalists; and the Ashmolean Museum was opened in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

It remained for the eighteenth to follow in the steps of the preceding century—to raise the Radcliffe Library and Observatory with the means bequeathed by the big doctor of Queen Anne's, London; to rebuild Queen's and create Worcester; to renovate and enlarge in every direction, and to embellish the university with several of those 'English gardens'

which contribute so much to the brightness and newness of Oxford.

Nor are the popular exaggerations of Oxford's oldness confined to her architecture and history. It is affirmed that in learning, taste, costume, tone, she is a monkish thing, altogether out of place in a century of free thought and democratic tendencies. She is mediæval, cry her detractors, in dress, sentiment, culture, politics, theology. Her fellows are celibates, her undergraduates live under restrictions copied from monastic disciplinarians. All this, and more of the same sort, one hears from persons given to assert positively the views for which they are indebted to ignorance. A man must know but little of monastic 'regulæ' to think them the models of the Laudian statutes, or else just nothing of the statutes to imagine them copied from the rules of the religious brotherhoods. Her fellows are restrained from marriage; but no celibatic sentiment would make them shudder at an announcement that they might take wives and retain their fellowships. If Oxford teaches old subjects, she teaches them in new ways, and for novel ends; and teaches also scores of things, about which the ancients never troubled their heads. As for her vestments and fashions of dress,—the style of the habiliments in vogue with her 'high Church' clergy comes from the Puritans rather than the monks, and is

more referable to the Quakers than the canons. The patterns of her academic gowns and fripperies were cut by Laud's tailors, who were amongst the rudest innovators of a revolutionary time; and it makes one smile to be told that her bombazeen and cat-skins, her merino slops and trencher caps, are highly characteristic of the outward garniture of the ingenuous and splendid youths who patronize the clothiers of the High Street, and rely upon London professors of the sartorial art for the latest fashions and 'temporary accommodation.' In religion she is not older than Christianity; and though, until the other day, her students were compelled to sign the Thirty-nine Articles—declarations, by the way, of no very great antiquity—a considerable proportion of the more recent subscribers are favourers of neology. Her fashions and sports are new. Oxonian horsemanship came in under the Stuarts. George the Third was king before the university went in for cricket. Her aquatic activity is a growth of the present century. She voted pugilism a blackguard amusement a generation since; she has given up snuff, and smokes tobacco; her youngsters prefer claret to fruity port; and even her veterans play whist according to 'Cavendish.' Intimately connected with the aristocracy, who, of course, think well of the existing state of things, and with the Church—

which, regarded as a political contrivance, and only with respect to its political status, has more reason than any other institution to anticipate discomfort from democratic developments—she cherishes a very decided sympathy with the party of resistance. Her members cheer Mr. Disraeli, and howl at Mr. Bright; but when on that account she is charged with antiquated Toryism, her accusers shut their eyes to the date of Mr. Disraeli's doctrines, and his fondness for new ways. Divested of specious phrases, and reduced to practical demands, the political programme for which she fights differs in nothing from the Whiggism of '32. And even in her exertions for modern conservation, she is opposed by a large proportion of her members. A tree is known by its fruit; and what political fruit may be gathered at Oxford appears from the utterances of such men as Mr. Goldwin Smith and Mr. Thorold Rogers, and from the composition of the present ministry, which contains more of the flower of Oxford than any cabinet of our whole history. That the ministry bent on new things comprises Mr. Gladstone, Lord Kimberley, Mr. Lowe, Lord Granville, Mr. Cardwell, Mr. Fortescue, and Mr. Göschen,—seven Oxonians, of whom two are double-firsts, one is a first in classics and second in mathematics, and three are firsts in classics,—is a notable reply to the generally prevalent notion, that, be-

cause Oxford, in a new way, defends and admires old things, she has neither sympathy nor respect for new politics.

And now, the reader may put down the tankard, and draw breath, after a pull which must have satisfied him that, instead of being the sleepy, mouldering, antiquated thing that her detractors declare her to be, Oxford is just about the smartest, brightest, and newest place out.

CHAPTER IX.

ARITHMETIC GONE MAD.

HITHERTO there has been great uncertainty concerning the populousness of Oxford University in the feudal centuries. In the good old days when simple folk, with considerable pretensions to wisdom, believed that Alfred restored learning at the confluence of the Isis and Cherwell, loyal Oxonians were wont to aver that once upon a time their Alma Mater numbered thirty thousand resident scholars. It was admitted that her population was liable to fluctuations,—sometimes sinking to fifteen thousand, occasionally dropping even so low as six thousand; but there was no toleration for the sceptic who ventured to inquire incredulously how a town of narrow boundaries and mean buildings contrived to provide accommodation for thrice ten thousand scholars, in addition to the multitude of burgesses and servitors, more or less dependent on the teachers and learners. But doubts were not extinguished by angry ridicule.

Criticism utterly discredited the old boast about thirty thousand students; but she failed to replace it with a computation that was altogether satisfactory to inquisitive persons. It came to be questioned whether mediæval Oxford ever entertained at one time the smaller population of fifteen thousand pupils, whether she ever had so many as ten thousand contemporary students, whether her scholars ever reached so high a number as six thousand. Uncertainty has hitherto enveloped the whole subject. But uncertainty is at an end. Henceforth, the reader may rest on the assurance of this omniscient book, which does not hesitate to say that the academic population of mediæval Oxford under ordinary circumstances fluctuated between two and three thousand,—never rising above the higher; but at exceptional crises, consequent on civil commotion or outbreaks of pestilence, sinking greatly beneath the lower of those numbers.

But though the wild statement about Oxford and her thirty thousand scholars belongs to the kind of intellectual pabulum which a clear-voiced 'younger Westminster' of my acquaintance has in view, when he stigmatizes an assertion as 'pure bosh,' it is worth while to look into the circumstances of its origin, and to ascertain upon what an airy foundation so prodigious and weighty

a declaration can rest securely for many generations.

Recording the transactions of the Oxonians of Henry the Third's time, our old friend Antonius à Bosco, on the authority of authors whom he refrains from honouring with special mention, affirms in one part of his 'Annals' that, somewhere about the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and thirty-one Oxford drew to her schools thirty thousand scholars,—consisting of Irish youths, who seem to have exhibited a most unusual hunger and thirst after learning in the thirteenth century; Scotch youths, who had thus early set the fashion of southward migration, which became so general with their descendants of the seventeenth century; French students who, in disgust at the extortionate ways of the Parisian vintners, flocked to Oxford, where wine was cheaper than in Paris; and youths of other nations, who naturally enough escaped from the darkness of their respective lands to bask in the warm rays of Oxonian philosophy, in addition to the lads of England and Wales, which two countries at the time in question had not a population exceeding two and a half millions.

'In a subsequent passage of his 'Annals' the extremely gullible Antonius, again forbearing to name his informants, uses language which implies that thirty thousand was not an altogether excep-

tional number of contemporary Oxonians, but an average population of academic residents during a considerable series of years,—*i.e.*, the later years of Henry the Third and the opening years of Edward the First. 'For whereas,' says Antony, 'in the latter end of King Henry III., and in the beginning of this king's reign, there were (*as 'tis reported*) thirty thousand clerks or scholars that lodged and studied in Oxford, and the suburbs thereof, there were now scarcely half the number, occasioned partly by the pestilence, but chiefly by the said provisions, and, as some say, by the Friars then enticing novices to be of their order.'

If Antony had said nothing more about the matter, we should have been left entirely to conjecture, in our attempts to arrive at what the honest man deemed to be adequate authority for his preposterous assertions. But fortunately he lets the cat out of the bag in a passage where he quotes words said to have been spoken before the pope at Avignon, in 1357, by Richard of Armagh. 'Although,' the archbishop is reported to have said, in a discourse which doubtless exaggerated the evils that had resulted to Oxford from the conduct of the Mendicants, 'there were at the Studium of Oxford, even *in my time, thirty thousand students*, there are not now six thousand.' Though Richard of Armagh is believed to have been born in the thirteenth century,

it is not to be imagined that his academic time, spoken of in the sermon, was of that century. A vigorous man, shortly before his death at Avignon, in 1360, he was an Oxford scholar in the earlier part of the fourteenth age. Thus, even if credit is given to the words put in the archbishop's mouth, it appears that evidence concerning the state of Oxford in the opening or middle years of the fourteenth century, is coolly applied by Wood to the Oxford of some fifty years earlier.

An Oxonian teacher, at a time when the Mendicants were vainly endeavouring to render themselves the dominant power of the place, Richard Fitz-Ralph had fought many a wordy battle against the friars within the university, and, after becoming Archbishop of Armagh, he continued to distinguish himself by the firmness with which, as a chief of the secular clergy, he opposed the ambitious encroachments of the religious beggars. A plain and pungent speaker, he so infuriated the Mendicants that they in revenge prevailed on the Pope to cite him to Avignon, to answer in the Papal presence for the injurious charges with which he had aspersed their orders. Thus placed on his defence, Fitz-Ralph, by no means the man to die without a groan, told the pontiff all that he knew, and perhaps a good deal more, to the disadvantage of the beggar priests, who, according to their adversary's statements, had

sown and cherished dissensions at Oxford, had violently seized the pupils of other masters, had stirred up bloody riots in the seats of learning, and had brought such discredit on the schools, that they were languishing for want of scholars. Unable to silence their enemy by fair means, the friars are suspected of having removed him by foul play. The archbishop died at Avignon,—his partisans said, significantly, of poison. Anyhow, Richardus Armachanus passed away, and Oxonian seculars honoured his memory by repeating with natural exaggeration all the brave things which he had uttered for the university and against the friars. But if in the excitement of the controversy he really went so far in the way of tall talk as to declare that he recollected Oxford with thirty thousand scholars resident in her inns, it is not calumny to say that, sacred personage though he was, his eloquence was sometimes of a kind which the Americans politely designate 'cautionary.' It is, however, fair to suppose that he was misreported by foolish tongues or careless transcribers. If he said that, whereas Oxford in his youth afforded instruction to nearly 3000 students, her scholars had dropt below a thousand, and almost to 600, he gave utterance to a statement which is quite credible, and was liable to gross misrepresentation by any clerk who, in time long

after the primate's death, accidentally added a cipher to the two batches of numerals.

How far the 'other nations,' as Wood describes them with significant vagueness, may be credited with yielding the university un-English elements, I will offer no opinion: but there is good reason for believing that mediæval Oxford comprised a considerable number of foreign pupils. The commotions which troubled the university of Paris in the thirteenth century — commotions that, doubtless, arose from juster causes for discontent than the dearness of wine—resulted in a migration of scholars from the Seine to the Isis; an event which is, perhaps, less remarkable as an eccentric social occurrence, than as an illustration of the intercourse which England, in the French period of her history, maintained with the inhabitants of France. But though Henry the Third's invitation to the Parisian scholars was followed by an appearance of numerous French students at the Oxford halls, it is impossible to infer from the contradictory annalists what was the number of these comers from Paris. One writer computes them at a thousand; a more ambitious scribe maintains that they numbered several thousands; but there are no grounds for thinking that they exceeded one or two hundred individuals. Again, even if there were no direct and reliable evidence of

a Scotch element amongst the scholars of Henry the Third's Oxford, it would be reasonable to infer from the migratory habits of the North British population in more recent ages, that they helped to swell the ranks of the English university; but however ready they may have been to exchange their inclement atmosphere and sterile land for the milder clime and more exuberant soil of the South, it is not probable that Scotland sent so many of her children to mediæval Oxford as the writers imagined who plied their pens after the tendency of Scotchmen to travel southwards had provoked the resentment of the Stuart sovereigns and become a matter of proverbial satire. As for assertions concerning the Irishry of mediæval Oxford, one would be disposed to reply in the fashion of my young friend of Westminster school, were there not strong official testimony to the existence of an important and turbulent Irish element in the scholastic community. The disturbances between the Irish Oxonians and the English Oxonians of the Northern counties, which agitated the university more than once in the thirteenth century, and occasioned a special statute for their assuagement, are historic facts. But in spite of all that the credulous Antony tells us about the ferocious nature of these academic Celts, and of quarters specially set apart for the entertainment of scholars from the Emerald Isle; and in spite of the statute '*De Concordiâ*

faciendâ inter Boreales et Hibernienses,' and more recent evidences of Paddy's uproarious doings at the seat of learning, it is not credible that the number of Irish in Oxford was ever more than enough to afford a justificatory colour to the cry, by which the Oxonian boarding-school keepers contrived to put down the non-scholastic keepers of lodging-houses.

In the spirit of the old legal pleaders, who in the same exordium would utter half-a-hundred contradictory pleas, Antony Wood was alike firm in asserting that the Oxonian scholars of Henry the Third's time numbered thirty thousand or half that number. As a matter of personal preference he insisted on the former computation; but weak brethren, who could not believe in the existence of so vast a multitude in so small a space, might be allowed to rest on the more moderate statement. If Armachanus was wrong in rating the academic populace at thirty thousand, at least Rishanger did not exaggerate when he computed it at fifteen thousand. And since the greater includes the less, the annalist argued that believers in Armachanus were necessarily believers in Rishanger.

When Henry the Third, during his struggle with the barons, summoned his contumacious nobles to meet him at Oxford, he took the wise precaution of ejecting the entire population of scholars from their peculiar quarters, in order that the bellicose propen-

sities of pugilistic students might not increase his embarrassment, and that his guests might find convenient lodgings under the shadow of his court. Of the scholars thus summarily ejected from their inns, and ordered to pursue their studies in less desirable market-towns, unblushing chroniclers affirm that the number was fifteen thousand.

The social life of England's middle age seems to have been alike remarkable for compressibility of populace and elasticity of habitations. Whilst human stock could be packed as close as herrings in a hamper, the dwellings of the period must have been constructed of a material which permitted their instantaneous expansion, to meet exceptional emergencies. It is singular, that of the thirty thousand or fifteen thousand students thus ejected from Oxford on a moment's notice, Northampton—at that time a place equal in size to one of Mr. Bright's west-country villages—received the majority, who found themselves so comfortable in their new homes, that, had not a seasonable abatement of the civil troubles permitted them to return to their old quarters, Northampton might have become chiefly famous for scholarship, and Oxford nothing more than an obscure provincial town. In return for her hospitality the Oxonians, whose sympathies were with the turbulent barons, defended Northampton against the royal forces, until the enraged

sovereign swore an oath, which he unfortunately omitted to fulfil, that every sophister amongst them should be hung on a gibbet. Thirty thousand Oxonians sus. per col. on thirty thousand gibbets would have been an impressive thing in the way of tragic and sensational spectacle. It makes one smile to remember that the sovereign who thus threatened to give his Oxonians the fullest possible measure of rope, was the munificent patron of learning—the veritable Alfred of scholastic romance—to whom Oxford 'Universitas' is indebted for her first royal charter.

In support of the choicest of the many fictions in which his soul delighted, Antony Wood brought together seven considerations which were designed to satisfy the most inveterate sceptic of the reasonableness of the Armachanian computation of the academic population in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Oxford in the thirteenth century had three hundred inns for scholars—an impudent statement, for which the antiquary had no shadow of evidence—and therefore her students must have numbered thirty thousand. In addition to her inns she had religious places, in which many students were harboured; therefore Armachanus was quite within bounds when he talked of her thrice ten thousand students. Many students lodged and studied in taverns and victualling-houses; other students lodged in 'poor cabins,' and in the 'turrets

or turrells' of the town-wall. The trade of Oxford in the thirteenth century sustained a 'great multitude of burghers.' Oxford at that time had streets which architectural renovators demolished. It was found necessary to create in that same century 'a certain judge, called Hebdomidarius,' to decide in the many disputes continually arising amongst the young gentlemen of 'Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, Spain, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Polonia, &c.,' who there received their training in all polite arts from the Oxford teachers. All which facts rendered it as plain as a pike-staff, or any other exceptionally manifest implement, that Oxford must have contained thirty thousand scholars at a time when England and Wales together did not contain more than two and a half millions of inhabitants.

It remained for the astounding Professor Huber—who some thirty years since was so loudly commended for knowing about our universities everything which he appropriated from Wood, or received from his special clique of university crammers—to swallow the Armachanian fiction, and to improve upon Wood's arguments in support of its historic veracity. *Of course,* urged this marvellous professor, when Armachanus asserted that Oxford once upon a time had thirty thousand scholars, he included in that census not only the scholars, but their tradespeople, bedmakers, and the whole mul-

titude of women who ministered to their comfort. 'Thus,' says this amazing and unparalleled German, 'we may reckon not only the monastic scholars, the messengers, the minor officers of the University and of the Nations, and personal servants, tradespeople, artisans, more intimately connected with the university or its studies,—such as copiers, parchment-makers, illuminators, bookbinders and booksellers (stationers), apothecaries, surgeons, barbers, washerwomen, and all understrappers; but we may also add that great mass of "nondescripts" of rabble of both sexes, even to the *mulierculæ* of many kinds, who at all the universities form a nest, striving to cling to the *Alma Mater*, were it only to the outermost hem of her garment, in order thus to be enabled to squeeze through with impunity.' The obvious merits of Wood's suggestion, that Oxford derived a considerable proportion of her thirty thousand resident scholars from Polonia, sink into insignificance, when contrasted against the ingenuity and courage of the Teutonic doctor who, to defend the archbishop against charges of exaggeration and mistake, suggests that the precisely truthful primate numbered amongst Oxford students young women of the kind, whose delinquencies in these days occasionally procure for them gratuitous entertainment in the spinning-house.

There is a delicious flavour of irony in the

assumption that the opponent of the friars would have been quite justified in regarding as scholars of the university all washerwomen, and less honourable members of the female sex, who had any kind of industrial or pecuniary relations with actual students. The humour which thus imputes scholastic quality to the sempstresses of schoolmen reminds one of the illogical appropriator of other persons' merits who held himself duly qualified to boast of his proficiency in the German language because his cousin played the German flute.

Another instance of Professor Huber's original way of dealing with figures occurs in the passage where he draws from Wood's account of the riot of 1297 certain inferences, which demonstrate him to be a complete master of arithmetical hocus-pocus who, had he turned his attention to commercial finance, would have made or marred the fortunes of half the speculators of Europe. In his narrative of that academic commotion, Wood gives the substance of contemporary records, which represent that three thousand or more clerks fought on the side of the university, and were assisted in the fray by their manciples and servants, besides other persons of inferior note.

A commonplace reasoner, from these facts, would have argued that, in a quarrel fomented by the chancellor, and involving the passions of the whole

university, every student would have joined in the fray, unless bodily infirmity prevented him from doing so; and that therefore the force of scholastic belligerents was pretty nearly equal to the entire number of scholars then resident in the university.

But Dr. Huber is no ordinary critic. First he is pleased to assume that the servants and humble academical abettors of the three thousand students numbered five thousand—a supposition which he deems quite reasonable and consistent with the conditions of academic life at a time when scholars were, for the most part, needy creatures; when the majority of Oxonian students were dwellers in wretched lodgings, or schoolboys closely packed in boarding-houses; and when it was quite unusual, though not unknown, for an undergraduate to have a body servant. Having thus raised the academic fighters to a host of eight thousand, and conferred student's rank upon every collegiate manciple and servant, Dr. Huber performs a still more marvellous feat of arithmetical demonstration, by which he raises the academic population about fifty per cent; a result which is next used as evidence that Rishanger's estimate was not excessive. It is not, he insists, to be imagined that all the scholars were in the fight, which, though strongly attractive to the robust idlers and passionate partisans of the university, would be avoided by reading men. 'We

may be allowed, perhaps, to reckon those who remained quietly at home at three or four thousand. We should, consequently,' urges the demonstrator, 'have at that time an academic population of twelve thousand souls, which fully coincides with the number of fifteen thousand stated by Rishanger to have existed prior to the breaking out of the great civil disturbances and the expulsion of the foreigners.' And if the university numbered fifteen thousand in one generation, why is it incredible that it held twice that number at an earlier date? The sceptic declares it improbable that the schools ever afforded instruction to fifteen thousand, minus those unlearned persons and *mulierculæ* who merely ministered in servile or vicious ways to the scholarly element of the said multitude. But since the folly of the sceptic has been demonstrated in the case of the fifteen thousand, is it not fair to presume that, if the real facts were brought to light, they would be equally conclusive as to the sceptic's foolishness with respect to the computation of thirty thousand? Can anything be plainer? Ergo, it is the part of common sense to recognize the probability of Oxford having formerly entertained thirty thousand male and female academicians at the same time.

The foregoing is no burlesque, but a fair summary of the learned and sagacious Professor's argument in defence of the Armachanian fiction, which induced

Thomas Gascon, in the middle of the fifteenth century, to write: 'Thirty thousand scholars existed in Oxford before the great plague, as I saw in the rolls of the old chancellors when I myself was chancellor there.' We are accustomed to speak of monkish fables and simplicity as affairs of the past. But that the German writer who swallowed the romance of the Oxonian Alfred, and thus improved upon the ridiculous statements of a marvel-loving book-worm of the seventeenth century, was not only treated with courtesy by our university dons of thirty years since, but was enthusiastially applauded by them for historic insight, shows that even in this enlightened century credulity may find a home in learned places.

CHAPTER X.

REDUCTION OF THE ESTIMATES.

ONE of the unfortunate consequences of the absurd exaggeration, with which the old annalists misled their readers concerning the population of Oxford in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was the dejection with which Oxonians of later times regarded the existing state of their university; when, instead of having cause for despondency, they were not without grounds for triumph.

Comparing the fewness of their scholars against the tens of thousands who were said to have thronged the little class-rooms of School Street in previous ages, the Oxonian fellows of the fifteenth century bewailed the decadence of the university, and attributed its decay—a decay which was quite imaginary—to the pernicious influence of endowments. What had colleges done for the university? they asked. Before the rise of the endowed houses, unsubsidized schoolmasters had taught within the chancellor's jurisdiction thirty thousand scholars. The colleges

arose, and, lo! Oxford could gather from the whole country barely a thousand pupils. With wealth had come the vices of prosperity—sloth and lukewarmness. Just as the Church had deteriorated from her pristine virtue in proportion as she had acquired riches, so the learning of the university had diminished in proportion with the increase of her wealth; to which view hearty Richard Ullerston replied by telling the croakers, that instead of quarrelling with their bread and butter, they should thank God for their endowments, and rest assured that if Oxford had gone a considerable way to the bad in a state of material prosperity, she would have travelled in the same direction much faster and further had she remained poor. 'It was, in this respect, the same with church and university. Each had deteriorated, but the deterioration would have been far more appalling had it not been for endowments.

In the same century, describing the fallen condition of his university, which doubtless suffered considerably from the troubles of the period, although it was a time fruitful of collegiate benefactors, an academic croaker exclaimed dolorously, 'And thus in truth, fathers, in the raging of the wars and scarcity of food and money, our kingdom is impoverished; and as for the moderate reward due to virtue and study, few give anything to the university. Our halls and lodgings are ruined; the

doors of our schools and lecture-rooms closed, while of the many thousand students which report says once existed here, not one thousand is left. This remnant is weary of life, and after most laborious study, has attained neither reward nor even honour. Some even work on to old age—men of the greatest wisdom—expecting in vain the fruit of good works.' In this mournful utterance is caught a note of the distress which prevailed in either university at this crisis amongst the keepers of the unendowed schools whose ancient prosperity was being fast absorbed by the endowed societies. But the most noteworthy point of the lament is the assertion, delivered with the emphasis of truth, that the students had dwindled from many thousands to less than one thousand—a population which, when it has been increased by the large number of masters and other superior members of the university, is not lower than what was in all probability the average strength of the academic residents in times of scholastic stagnation.

The excellent editor of the 'Munimenta Academica Oxon.'—the Rev. Henry Anstey, Vicar of St. Wendron, Cornwall—gives an opinion that the academic population of mediæval Oxford was much nearer six thousand than thirty thousand; and in the sentences of his introductory essay, that immediately succeed this utterance of opinion, he

shows clearly that his judgment inclines to a much lower computation than the smaller of these numbers. Setting aside Wood's assertions that the university formerly comprised three hundred halls, he certifies that eighty is the largest number of inns of whose existence there is any evidence; and looking at those of them which still exist, and the remains of others that have been only partially destroyed, he says that the number of inmates housed at the same time in an inn of average dimensions cannot have exceeded thirty. The eighty inns, therefore, even if they are thought to have all flourished at the same time, afforded bare accommodation for two thousand four hundred scholars, of whom a considerable proportion consisted of principals, vice-principals, and other scholastic persons above the various degrees of pupilage. The suppression of the chums furnishes strong presumptive testimony that they were much less numerous than the inmates, who must have been the chief element of the academic world from the time when Oxford first became much more than a mere local seminary. If we put the 'inmates' at two thousand four hundred, and the 'chums' at six hundred, we attribute to the university a population which it most probably never attained in feudal days, save at times of quite exceptional fulness.

The supposition that the Oxonians of Catholic

England fluctuated between a thousand and three thousand is further countenanced by the already cited admission that in the fifteenth century the number of learners actually fell beneath ten hundred, and by the significant frequency with which the larger number appears in the annals of the university as the aggregate of the students called together by circumstances which stirred the entire community.

For instance, in 1209, when King John, 'in contempt of ecclesiastical authority,' as Wood observes with an air of pious horror, caused three scholars to be led beyond the walls of Oxford, and hung in the suburbs, on mere suspicion of their complicity in the crime of a clerk who had murdered a woman, the schools were suddenly deserted by the rest of their customary frequenters, who, thoroughly scared by the king's rigour, lost no time in flying to less perilous towns. 'Whereupon,' says Wood, 'the scholars of the University being much displeased at this unworthy act, they, *to the number of three thousand* (as well masters as juniors) left Oxford, so that *not one* (*as some say*) *remained behind*, but either went some to Cambridge, some to Reading, and others to Maidstone, in Kent, to make a further progress in their studies.' Here is a distinct statement that the entire force of the university, graduates and undergraduates, skedaddled, and that the fugitives (according to the historian's witnesses)

did not altogether exceed three thousand. And this sudden dispersion of the three thousand, be it remembered, occurred within fifty or sixty years of the time when we are asked to believe that the university had thirty thousand scholars.

Again, the great town and gown row of 1297 was a disturbance which must have united all sections of the academic population against the 'laics,' and yet the annalists from whom Wood drew his facts—authorities who certainly would not have underrated the scholastic belligerents—did not venture to compute the armed clerks at much, if at all, more than three thousand. It is excellent fooling or sheer folly on the part of Professor Huber to suggest that some three or four thousand studious men 'remained quietly at home,' when the three thousand rowing scholars perilled life and limb for the honour of the university in a sanguinary contest from which neither the manciples nor the subordinate servants of the inns were absent. From the whole substance and tenor of the narrative of this extraordinary fight, it is clear that there were no academic skulkers, that the scholars were 'out in full force.' Indeed the very author, Wood—from whom Professor Huber derived all that he knew about this fierce struggle of many days—is careful to say that none of the scholars adopted the cowardly course of keeping out of the conflict. 'Towards the end the riot,' says

Wood, 'did so much increase that *all* clerks and laics coming out of their houses, each party gathered together in a body to fight.' This is explicit enough, and yet the German historian insists upon it that only half the clerks were concerned in the struggle, which deserves to be called an outbreak of civil war rather than a mere municipal riot, and was 'such a terrible and dismal conflict as before this time the like was never known in Oxford.' Continuing his narrative of the atrocities perpetrated by the townsmen, whilst, according to the learned Huber, four thousand Oxonians were reading behind sported oaks, the annalist says, 'Some they killed, multitudes they wounded, others they beat and killed about the streets. Some that fled to the churches for sanctuary, and were praying at the high altar, ready with their open breasts to receive the fatal blow, them they wounded and dragged out, and caused them to accompany those that they had before taken, to be driven to prison.' And yet in this universal and sanguinary battle (which took place in the very period when Oxford is stated to have thirty thousand students) the scholastic belligerents were but 'three thousand *or* more.'

By computing the student-population of mediæval Oxford at some two thousand five hundred, we make the university a far greater power in a state which contained some two million five hun-

dred thousand souls, than modern Oxford, with her fifteen hundred undergraduates, whilst the inhabitants of England and Wales may be put in round numbers at twenty millions of individuals. If mediæval Oxford had a fixed number of two thousand five hundred students, and had maintained to the present time the proportion which her learners of the feudal epoch bore to the mediæval inhabitants of England and Wales, she would have at this date twenty thousand instead of fifteen hundred undergraduates. Again, the absurdity of the Armachanian fiction may be thus illustrated. If we compute the present population of England and the principality in round numbers at twenty million; estimate their mediæval population at two million five hundred thousand; and accept as true the Armachanian fable of 30,000 scholastic residents at Oxford, when the population of England and Wales was only an eighth of its present number, it follows that if Oxford had maintained her ancient numerical proportion to the population of England and Wales, she would at this present time have two hundred and forty thousand resident scholars.

Though the Reformation greatly increased the importance of the universities, by rendering them the seminaries of the entire national clergy, whereas in Catholic times, whilst training the majority of

the secular priesthood, they had afforded instruction to only an insignificant minority of the higher and more aristocratic section of the ecclesiastical order; and though the social status of Oxonians and Cantabrigians rose with the fortunes of the Anglican Church,—the religious revolution was not followed by such an increase in the academic population as the suppression of the monastic schools might have appeared likely to occasion. The extinction of the religious seminaries would doubtless have resulted in an immediate growth of the universities, had not the local schools been very generally replaced during the Reformation period by the plentiful creation of grammar-schools of another and more popular kind.

The days of Edward the Sixth and Elizabeth saw the establishment of grammar-schools in many of the more populous districts of the country; and the fashion which the ecclesiastical reformers thus set of multiplying the sources of laical education was followed throughout the seventeenth centuries by commercial corporations and municipalities, as well as by benevolent individuals. Hence arose a large proportion of the endowed grammar-schools of our provincial towns,—seminaries which were eminently serviceable in past time, though many of them have sunk into insignificance, and at the present date effect more for the hindrance than the advance-

ment of popular instruction. The development of these schools, in their generations of early vigour, not only prevented the numerical growth of the Oxonian population, which, but for their action would have resulted from the ecclesiastical revolution, but actually diminished the number of students ordinarily resident at Oxford and Cambridge by draining the universities of their infantile pupils. On being provided with good grammar-schools at their own doors, parents ceased to send their young children to Oxford and Cambridge for elementary instruction. Scarcely had the colleges sucked the educational business from the mediæval inns, than the provincial schools drained the universities of their pupils of quite tender years. Whereupon, relieved of her ancient responsibilities to the little boys of the country, Oxford became more and more a seminary for big boys and young men, till the word 'college' came, in course of time, to signify a school for adult learners.

Throughout the years of Edward, Mary, Elizabeth, and James the First, the universities grew in dignity and influence. Their schools supplied the nation with ecclesiastics of every degree, and yearly attracted a larger proportion of gentle and aristocratic students, who, though still mere boys in a large number of cases, were never such tiny lads as constituted a considerable part of the aca-

demic population in Catholic times. In short, Oxford and Cambridge gradually became what they still are — seminaries for the young men of our richer and superior classes. But though the average Oxonian undergraduate thus became a more polite and mannish personage, his academic companions were not more numerous. The colleges gave him better quarters, more luxurious fare, and a milder discipline, than the mediæval inns provided for the younger offspring of yeomen and mechanics; but from her loss of the little boys, his university could not boast a longer roll of students than she had in previous centuries.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century, the academic population of Oxford was certainly not more than two thousand five hundred, of whom more than two-thirds were learners *in statu pupillari*. It may, indeed, be questioned whether the regular scholastic residents of Elizabethan Oxford ever amounted to so high a number as two thousand. And annalists, whose errors are certainly on the side of exaggeration, make it clear that in the days of the British Solomon, the Oxonians present in the university at the same time seldom exceeded that number. When James the First visited Oxford in state, at the commencement of his reign — an occasion that must have raised the academic populace above its ordinary measure —

he was received by an impressive throng of learned persons; but even Wood does not require us to believe that the scholars, who deafened the royal party with their plaudits, exceeded two thousand two hundred and fifty-four.

The statistical enumerations of the degrees granted to Oxonians in past time afford no satisfactory indications of the populousness of the university; for in generations when the collegiate endowments were comparatively unproductive, and when, from the smallness of the realized wealth of the community, the pecuniary resources of the average student were very insecure, the proportion of scholars who remained at the university long enough to get degrees was very small. But such data assist the inquirer in forming a general estimate of the condition and numbers of our scholarly ancestors.

From lists which have escaped destruction, it appears that in twenty-eight years of Henry the Eighth's time, the average number of B.A. degrees granted annually was forty. The same was the average annual number of B.A. degrees conferred on Oxonian students during seven years in the reigns of Edward and Mary. Under Elizabeth the number of scholars who took the B.A. degree rapidly and greatly increased, in proportion as the Anglican Church flourished, under injunctions which

required the fairly prosperous beneficed clergy to contribute a proportion of their revenues to the education of indigent students, and Oxford was called upon to educate larger supplies of candidates for the highest clerical employment. The average annual number of B.A. degrees granted at Oxford throughout Elizabeth's reign was 97; and it is significant of the course of academic affairs, that whereas the B.A. degrees granted in the first five years of her rule numbered 45, 37, 31, 70, 29; the B.A. degrees granted during the last nine years of her government were 175, 103, 117, 134, 91, 113, 103, 154, 136. From the registrations of twenty-two years of James the First's time, it appears that the average annual number of the B.A. degrees granted in them was 192. Under Charles the First the average number was 165; and it is especially worthy of observation, that whereas in the more prosperous years of the martyr's reign, and during Laud's chancellorship, considerably more than 200 B.A. degrees were often granted in a single year, the B.A. degrees granted during four years of the civil war, from its outbreak to the capitulation of Oxford, were 106, 79, 39, 31. During the Commonwealth the annual average was 116; and under Charles the Second it rose to 179.

During the Restoration period, and in the High Tory days of the eighteenth century, it was the

fashion with Oxonians to refer dolefully to the Interregnum as a period when learning was utterly banished from the University, and the schools lay desolate. Clarendon,—a writer not incapable of the untruth which custom permits but cannot justify in a political partisan,—had, indeed, the common justice and prudence to allow that scholarship flourished in Alma Mater under the saints. But though the Royalist historian marvelled at the beneficence of Providence in allowing the seminary to be a fountain of wholesome learning whilst the nation remained in the iniquity of rebellion, the Oxonians, who were more ready to applaud his works than to read them, persisted in their gloomy view of Oxford's degradation under the Puritanical fanatics. How far it is true that the university was deserted during the earlier of the years, which the restored Cavaliers used to term 'the times of our late troubles,' may be learned from the author of 'The Foundation of the Universitie of Oxford (1651)' who observes in the preface to his compilation, 'The totall number of students of all degrees in this university, that had their names in every particular college, with the magistrates and daily officers thereunto belonging, besides divers young scholars that were relieved therein, which had no names in any of the colleges aforesaid, were in anno 1622 2850, and at this present there are in the same 3247.' Of

course great deductions must be made from the above numbers for non-resident academicians, if the reader would calculate from them the actual numbers of the scholastic residents in Oxford at the two periods.

It diminishes our surprise at the exaggerations with which Oxonians of ancient days misrepresented the populousness of Oxford, to find Dr. Ayliffe, of New College, who wrote his 'Ancient and Present State of the University of Oxford' in George the First's reign, so mistaken as to the real number of the resident Oxonians, as to assert (1723), 'The whole number of scholars in Oxford, living on the revenues of colleges, are about 1000, and of other students, before this long war, about twice as many, besides stewards, mancipals, butlers, cooks, porters, gardiners, barbers.' To ascertain how grossly this computation exaggerates the number of the foundationers, the reader has but to refer to the University Calendar; to learn how much it overrates the general academic population, he may examine 'The Catalogue of all Graduates in Divinity, Law, and Medicine; and all Masters of Arts and Doctors of Music, who have regularly proceeded or been created in the University of Oxford between October 10, 1659, and October 10, 1814.' This list gives the exact number of matriculations in each year of the long period which it brings under survey; and

from its returns it appears that in the first twenty years of the eighteenth century, the average annual number of matriculations exceeded 320 by no more than the fraction of a unit; and that the average annual number of matriculations throughout the entire century was only a fraction over 248.

By multiplying the average annual number of matriculations by four — the number of years requisite for the attainment of a B.A. degree—we get with sufficient exactness the average numerical strength of the undergraduates resident during the period in which the matriculation occurred. Against those students who spent more than the minimum time for ordinary scholars to consume in getting the B.A. degree may be put those of them who graduated in less than four years by virtue of privilege, and those many under-graduates whose names, from various causes, disappeared from the books of the university within a still shorter time after matriculation. Hence the average student population of Oxford, throughout the eighteenth century, was barely a thousand. When to this number has been added that of the principals, college-tutors, and graduate-academicians, living permanently or temporarily within the bounds of Alma Mater, the average total of resident Oxonians in the eighteenth century will be found to have been shamefully small.

A scribe given to the bootless utterance of offen-

sive truths would here take occasion to make some severe reflections on the condition of the university during the generations when the number of her scholars fell thus low, and the vigour of her schools languished under baneful influences. Such a censor would rouse enmity, and work no good by applying to this period of the university's career, such scarcely justifiable terms as 'dull' and 'inglorious,' and by suggesting that Georgian Oxford was less remarkable for the profound learning than the deep drinking of her academicians. But for the prudent and courteous writer of this page it is enough to speak of the eighteenth century as a time when Oxford was less solicitous about the number than the social and political quality of her pupils, and when she failed to accomplish all that might have been reasonably demanded from her for the intellectual progress of the country.

CHAPTER XI.

A HAPPY FAMILY.

UNLIKE their successors of the nineteenth century, who take the greater part of their muscular exercise on the surface or the banks of their rivers, the mediæval Oxonians were wont to practise their favourite athletic pastimes beyond the northern suburb on the open ground, which it was one of Antony Wood's crotchets to regard as the ancient site of the university. Just outside the town, northward of Balliol and Bocardo, and the sites of Worcester and St. John's, lay the university playground, whither the scholars of all ages and degrees daily flocked, for bodily and mental recreation, so soon as they had attended the lectures and performed the tasks of the morning, and had consumed the not luxurious dinners which were served in their inns at a time nearer the hour at which the modern Oxonian takes his breakfast, than the hour at which he eats a heavy luncheon. The locality has been so built over and otherwise changed in these latter cen-

turies, that it retains nothing of its pristine appearance; but its name, the Beaumont, is preserved in the appellation of the street which conducts the wayfarer to Worcester College from the space that was the southern extremity of the Field of Sports.

It was to the Bellosite, or Beaumont, that the zealous student daily hastened from School Street or his inn for the quick walk and breath of fresh air, by which he cleared the cobwebs from his brain and braced his nerves for another six hours' spurt of hard reading. Beneath the shadow of the Beaumont elms, whenever the noon was bright and warm, there gathered a crowd of adult loiterers—elderly principals, whose cheery faces and corpulent figures proclaimed the fulness of their inns and purses; stooping book-worms, whose lack-lustre eyes and awkward shyness indicated their quality; prying friars, whose affluence of speech not seldom offended their rivals whom they wished to conciliate; thin-lipped lecturers in sophistry, overflowing with the sarcasm and raillery which made them the most popular teachers of the university; and bachelors, intent on catching the colloquial tone and social air of the 'dons,' in whose steps they were ambitious of treading. And whilst the senior and graver men of the university chaffered in the shade about the prospects of the schools, or the health of principals who were under the care of the medical faculty,

and who could not hold their places for ever to the suppression of younger and better men; the boys of the learned community,—the little urchins of the grammar-schools, and the hobble-de-hoys of the parvis, and the big sophisters who would soon be graduates, ay, and bachelors who did not care to play the don prematurely,—thought of nothing but their respective games, and used their healthy lungs and clear voices in a fashion that demonstrated the resonance of what the poets are pleased to call the welkin.

In their lack of money for indulgence in equitation and other costly diversions, and their want of the knowledge and material appliances by which they might have found congenial pastime on the water, the Oxonians of feudal England contended in such sports as were in vogue with the commonalty of the land, and were generally practised on village commons by the offspring of yeomen and peasantry. They built snow forts and pelted one another with snowballs on the Beaumont when the winterly north wind covered the earth with whiteness. At other times they had recourse to quoits, pitch-bar, foot-ball, archery, prison-bars, hunt-the-hare, and other sports that were no less popular with English boys of the thirteenth, than they are with English boys of the nineteenth century. Of course, in obedience to a fundamental and universal principle of puerile na-

ture, they selected for their amusement in cold weather the games which required the smallest amount of muscular action, and in times of scorching sunlight and sweltering heat preferred the sports which involved violent bodily exertion. In the teeth of cutting March winds, or in the raw air of foggy November, they brought out their marbles and pegtops; in May and June they went in for foot-races and jumping-matches, wrestling, and feats of hopping.

Nor from the surveys of the sports of the Beaumont may we omit the use to which its fields were put for the almost daily practice of that noble art of self-defence, which, as an affair of fashionable amusement, may be said to have fallen out of time with the Benicia boy and perished with Tom Sayers. Five centuries before the immortal Bendigo enjoyed the Prince Regent's familiar friendship, pugilism was a highly esteemed art on English soil, and nowhere in the land were its professors more honourably entreated than at Oxford, where, I regret to say, it was zealously followed by the great majority of the schoolmen and schoolboys, less for the sake of its beneficial results on the practitioner's health of mind and muscle, than from a deliberate purpose to turn the knowledge of its mysteries to malicious account in the broils that almost daily broke the chancellor's peace. For though I would fain render mediæval

Oxford all such friendly services as honesty would sanction, I cannot aver that philosophic composure was the most conspicuous characteristic of her children, who were alike remarkable for morbid violence of temper, and for the alacrity with which, in defiance of Christian precept, they repaid blow with blow. Indeed, far from being the united and consistently amiable family, which they would have been had the practice of academic life corresponded with its theory, the Oxonians of olden time were so much given to bickerings, feuds, and contumelious disputations,—and so ready even in the holiest seasons to enforce their opinions by fists sent out straight from squarely-set shoulders—that for many generations the annals of the university are little more than the chronicles of successive shindies, in which the antagonistic elements of Alma Mater's seminary contended for the mastery by means no less shocking to the polite historian than creditable to the physical courage and endurance of the turbulent academicians.

Perhaps the majority of the riots, which imparted a grotesque rowdyism to the university under the Plantagenets, may be referred to the purely personal antagonisms which are sure to abound in every social organization that gathers into close quarters a large number of civilized human creatures, who are required by their religion to love

one another, and prefer the welfare of their neighbours before their own advancement. Centuries before the great Dr. Fell, of Christ Church, incurred the hatred of his lyrical detractor, who could not state the grounds of his vehement dislike of the Royalist dean, Oxonians hated one another for no more definable reason than that mutual aversion was the only course open to them. Even in these days, when we have grown so gentle and overflowingly benevolent, that we are just about as perfect beings as we were designed to be, it would not be difficult to find an Oxonian whose only sharp grievance is that social etiquette and academic law deny him the pleasure of punching the head, or tweaking the nose, or kicking the person, of some obnoxious fellow-collegian, against whom he can allege nothing worse than that 'the fellow has such a disgusting way of wearing his hat,' or 'will persist in running upstairs as if the whole college belonged to him.' But in this epoch of consummate good breeding, etiquette and law are strong enough to restrain the injured student from giving his wrath full play, and doing the desire of his heart on the object of his groundless detestation. He may, and doubtless does, glance disdainfully at his adversary, when they pass each other on their common staircase. On suitable occasions, for 'the beast's' discomfiture, he throws

into his voice the tone of snaky and subacidulous malignity, by which a thoroughly well-bred youth knows how to offer an insult without incurring the penalty of insolence. Sometimes, he will relieve his enraged soul by sneering at his enemy from the other side of chapel or lecture-room. But in the feudal epoch, law was less weak and etiquette less diabolical. Instead of sneering, or glancing, or toning insolently at a fellow-collegian whom he disliked, the mediæval Oxonian struck the odious 'inmate' slap between the eyes with clenched fist, and said, 'Now, if you don't like that, let us go to Beaumont with our friends.' Whereupon the foes, attended by their friends, went out of town beyond the spot, marked now-a-days by the Martyrs' Memorial; and Bellosite—to make the only pun which shall disgrace these classic pages—became the site of *bellum*.

It would, however, be a great mistake for the reader to suppose that the academic commotions arose solely or chiefly from the passions of the undergraduates. The case was far otherwise; and if I were constrained to name the class of scholastic persons who furnished the most violent and dangerous rioters, I am afraid that it would be my painful duty to reflect warmly on the turbulent propensities of the older clergy. Comprising members of each of the three rival sections of the

mediæval ecclesiastics—monks who disdainfully regarded the seculars as persons amenable to the authority of the national bishops; seculars who, envying the riches and superior social degree of the regular ecclesiastics, were in favour of a dissolution of the monasteries; and friars who made war with equal ferocity on the seculars whom they accused of ignorance, and on the ancient societies of monks whom they upbraided for luxurious sloth —the clerical population of the university was an aggregation of hostile forces. Sometimes the monks of one order quarrelled with monks of another brotherhood on points of precedence, religion, or philosophical opinions. At another time, the clerical controversy would be waged between friars who used improper means to draw pupils to their schools, and seculars who, jealous of the growing influence of the mendicants, stigmatized the beggar-priests as robbers of children. Rows also continually took place between ecclesiastics of the same order. Nor is it to be imagined that the ordained disputants were content to wage their battles with the weapons of argument and clamour. Hostilities always commenced with speech, but when the divines had talked themselves hoarse and found their eloquence of no avail, they were not reluctant to use their physical strength for the humiliation of their enemies.

But though the ecclesiastics may not be commended for contributing to the peacefulness of the university, it would be most unjust to insinuate that, but for their presence in the schools, Oxford would have been a sufficiently quiet and orderly place. To get a view of all the explosive materials gathered together in the academic inns, the reader must recall the social conditions of the entire country, at a time when the realm was made up of several distinct nations,—the Celts of the principality and other western parts of the island, the Saxons north of the Humber, the Saxons of the southern shires, and the French families who looked down with equal scorn on the Englishry whom their ancestors had struck to the earth, and on the British who had slowly succumbed to the German immigrants. It would be scarcely an exaggeration to say that in feudal England each country was a separate nation. It would be strictly true to affirm that shires may be parcelled into groups, each of which had every important element of distinct national life except the most important of all elements, independent government. Each county had its traditions and usages, its domestic legends and peculiar festivals: and some of these groups of shires, separated by no more important boundary than a few small rivers, a line of low hills, or a tract of fen, were set asunder by im-

passable barriers of prejudice and bitter recollection. In Wales, an ancient and murderous feud, ever ready in moments of apparent amity to spring into new life, divided the North from the South. The case was the same in England, where the sentiments with which the men of the northern counties regarded, and were regarded by the men of the southern shires, may be likened to those of a married couple who, united in the first instance without love, have only learnt how to endure each other's perversities, because each knows that divorce is beyond their reach.

On coming to Oxford the youngsters from each of these mutually hostile districts of a disunited kingdom took up their abode in one or another of the several inns frequented by students of their special locality. There were hotels for North Welshmen, and others for Britons from South Wales; inns in which no student from the north of the Humber ever sought lodging, and other boarding-houses where no scholar from a southern shire was ever known to break bread. With that spirit of cohesiveness, which has in later times distinguished their countrymen in London, the Scotch Oxonians 'chummed' or 'mated' together in houses famous for porridge and haggis; and in the same way the Irish scholars herded together in ramshackle tenements which, above all the other scholastic habita-

tions of the noisy town, gained a bad name for dirt, uproarious clamour, and dissolute manners. Thus domesticated in separate establishments, which flourished by consulting their provincial whims and fostering the provincial prejudices of their inmates, the younger scholars too often missed the chief good of an university education, and, instead of enlarging their sympathies and losing their asperities by intercourse with companions of divers kinds, they confirmed themselves in their worst social qualities by living in cliques to whose members those qualities appeared agreeable and virtuous.

In the university, thus made up of antagonistic colonies, large bodies of students were continually at feud and blows with each other, and altercations arising out of accidents gave rise to contests, alike perilous to the belligerents and scandalous to sober spectators. Either because a Scot refused to give him the wall, or had spoken irreverently of St. Patrick, an Irish student would lay the doer of the insult sprawling in the kennel. Springing to his feet, the victim of the assault would square up to his assailant; but ere three rounds had been fought the contest became a national affair, in which every Irishman and every Scot, who caught rumour of the fray, were bound by honour to take part. A quick runner carried the tidings to the Irish chamberdekyns, declaring that a compatriot was in danger from the

machinations of bloodthirsty Scotchmen; and forthwith there rushed to the field of battle half a hundred lads, bent on vengeance and mischief, who, notwithstanding their alacrity to help a compatriot in distress, failed to reach the scene of action sooner than the half hundred Scots with whom they forthwith proceeded to exchange the compliments of war. Sometimes the row resulted in nothing worse than a little work for the bone-setters; but such an affair was not unlikely to occasion fatal casualties, and might spread so as to draw the whole university into riot.

Scarce a week passed in which some two or more of the provincial factions—'the nations,' as some writers designate them, and as Professor Huber calls them with piquant pomposity—failed to break the academic peace with a fight. Now it would be a row between North Welshmen and South Welshmen; next week the battle would be between the friars and seculars, or the Benedictines and Cistercians. Again and again it happened that the followers of conflicting systems of philosophy, or graduates in rival faculties, converted the university into a bear-garden, by exchanging the common forms of Latin disputation for the war-shriek, and striving to assert their superiority over their enemies by an appeal to fleshly arms. On hearing his 'major' called in question insultingly, or his 'minor' spoken

of with disrespect, the sensitive master of sophistry was only too ready to prove the unexceptional quality of his biceps by hostile action upon his opponent's skull. Hence it came to pass in the middle of the fourteenth century that the Nominalists and Realists—or, as they were sometimes called after their respective teachers, the Occhamists and Scotists—passed from words to blows, and arrived at a temporary settlement of their differences in a way that secured for them the cordial approbation of the Cribs and Bendigos of the period. Thus also the men of Physic and the men of Law used to wax fierce and bandy words of 'high disdain and insult,' until it occurred simultaneously to both faculties that, instead of beating the air with blatant talk, they had better have recourse to a grand old rule and simple plan for the arrangement of vexed questions. 'The old discord,' Antonius remarks, under date A.D. 1470, 'between the physicians and lawyers broke out this year again; so dangerous and troublesome it was to the peace of the university, by the frequent quarrels that were had between each other, wherein bloodshed was often committed, that complaints were made to grave persons about it, as in particular to George Nevill, archbishop of York; but how the quarrel was ended appeareth not, so imperfect are our registers in those times.' Who needs the light of registers

to learn how the difficulty ended? The archbishop, of course, as he was in duty bound to do, spoke deprecatingly of pugilism and the knife as unscholastic methods of disputation; and after listening respectfully to his grace, the lawyers and physicians agreed, with many assurances of mutual respect, to keep the peace towards one another until they should be inordinately tempted to fall back again on the unscholastic method.

The fiercest and most comprehensive of the purely academic rows, however, were the fights between the Northerners and Southerners—the two great parties of the scholastic commonwealth, compared with whom all the other factions of the university were insignificant cliques. Whilst the French, Scotch, and Irish colonies of Alma Mater were mere coteries of 'outsiders,' the main body of the scholars was divisible into Northern men and Southern men; and long after the disappearance of the French colony, which was a quickly transient feature of the university, and long after the Irishmen had been virtually banished from the schools, the North English and South English distracted Oxford with their rivalries and insolent pretensions. This perennial feud between the students from the northern and the scholars from the southern shires embittered and complicated all the minor dissensions of the universities; for as each of the two great parties

comprised secular and regular ecclesiastics, and graduates of every faculty, both of them found occasion, and deemed it good policy, to take secret or open part in the philosophic and ecclesiastical wranglings of the minor factions, with a view to the advancement of their respective party interests.

Thus every important question of academic action became an affair of contention between the Northerners and Southerners, who played with greater cleverness than honesty a game which entitles them to be compared to the two grand armies of the Ins and Outs, who under divers names have fought for supremacy in the political arena of modern England. No candidate for a high appointment in the university could attain the object of his ambition unless his claims were supported by the one or the other of the two great parties who at least once or twice a-year came to blows on some point of academic controversy, and at least once or twice in a generation gave Oxford a slight, but poignant, taste of the horrors of civil war.

On every occasion for electing a new chancellor of the university each of the two great parties put forward a candidate; and as no one of the minor factions could hope to secure the highest office of the scholastic commonwealth for a third nominee, the struggle for the place always took the form of a trial of strength between the Northerners and

Southerners. Whether electoral corruption tainted the scholastic constituency I cannot say, but it is certain that intimidation of the grossest and most savage kind was used to influence the elections, which seldom terminated without a riot.

In the fourteenth century, to relieve the elections of some of their most scandalous features, the Northerners and Southerners effected a peculiar compromise, by which the members of the two parties consented to relinquish much of their ancient right of personal interference at the poll, and appoint two commissioners who should act as scrutineers of the electoral lists, and see that no unfair influence was used to falsify the returns or otherwise misrepresent the will of the university. Each party elected its own commissioner, to whom, in consideration of his being chosen to discharge the functions of an attorney to his party, was given the title of procurator or proctor, the familiar appellation of an attorney in a consistorial court. For awhile the deputy was termed a scrutator, in recognition of the most important of his services at an election; but ere long he was invariably termed the proctor of his party.

But the proctor's office was one of twofold obligations. Together with the other powers with which his party invested him, he received authority to check and punish those of his constituents who

should try to defeat the object of his election; and in consideration of this power to control the members of his party, the university rendered him in a certain degree responsible for the conduct of his employers. Thus, whilst discharging an attorney's functions to a section of the university, he served Alma Mater herself as an officer appointed to maintain peace in his special division of the academic population.

Proctors—*i.e.* university officers authorised to maintain discipline in the university—had existed for a considerable time before the creation of Northern and Southern Scrutators. A statute of the university—supposed to have been enacted so early as the year 1252 (some ninety years before the date to which Wood assigns his invention of scrutineers)—makes mention of the university's proctors; but the statute of 1322, defining the functions of the proctors, as justices and officers of the peace for the academic community, indicates that the proctorial office was then reformed and enlarged. Anyhow, proctors seem to have flourished long before the rise of scrutineers. When, however, the two great scholastic parties had adopted the prudent custom of confiding their electoral interests to their proctors, and had, moreover, invested them with powers for maintaining discipline, the general convenience of the academic community required that the proctors of the parties should be the proctors of the whole

university. Hence the attorney and controller of the Southern men became the official precursor of the modern Senior Proctor; and from the ancient attorney and president of the Northerners we derive the august officer whom Oxonians of the present day call the Junior Proctor, and treat with such respect as he may deserve.

Though Antony Wood in the 'Fasti' is guilty of suggesting that the first proctors were perhaps created simultaneously with the first chancellor, he mentions in the 'Annals,' under date 1343, the circumstances which gave birth to the two functionaries who were the earliest proctors of the university. 'Now forasmuch,' he says, 'as these controversies were frequent in Oxford, causing thereby great emulation, which commonly ended in blows, the statutes for the election of the chancellor were without doubt made; for whereas about these times great variance fell out in the election of that officer, some aiming to have him a Northern, others a Southern man: divers statutes and injunctions chiefly reflecting upon such disorders, were, I say, this year enacted. Of which (some being, as I conceive, abolished or lost) was that concerning two scrutators in the election—that is, one should be a Northern, and the other a Southern man, lest underhand dealing should be used, and consequently parties injured.'

The new system of procuratorial scrutineers was

found to work so well in elections of Chancellors, that some four-and-twenty years after its first adoption it was applied to elections of Grammar-masters, by the statute of Congregation (A.D. 1357) which decreed that the votes recorded at these last-named contests should be examined by two scrutineers, one of whom should be a Regent-master of the Northern, and the other a Regent-master of the Southern party.*

CHAPTER XII.

'TOWN' AND 'GOWN.'

HITHERTO this work has spoken only of the purely academical faction-fights, the contests in which none but scholars participated. But the time has now come to speak of the yet graver and more comprehensive battles, in which all the antagonistic sections and cliques of the university used to combine against their natural enemies, the townsmen, or, as the delicious old Antony prefers to call them, 'the layicks.'

At this present date the antagonism between 'town' and 'gown' declares itself in more important ways than those feeble imitations of the ancient town-and-gown riots, which ruffle the waters of Oxonian life on every fifth of November. Whilst the university is represented at Westminster by two staunch Conservatives, the city sends to Parliament two decided and uncompromising Liberals; and in every past period of Oxford's story—with the single exception of the short time when the Puritans made themselves masters of the schools—the intercourse

of the scholars and burgesses of Oxford has been more or less qualified by sentiments of mutual hostility. In the eighteenth century, when Jacobite and High-Church Toryism was the politico-religious creed of the colleges, the citizens were Hanoverian and Low-Church. Under Charles the Second, when the Cavalier 'dons' were jubilant, the tradesmen of the High Street conceived themselves to have fallen on evil days. When the martyr-king made Oxford his garrison, the victuallers who provided him with food and drink furnished his enemies with particulars of all that transpired within the city. During Laud's supremacy, whilst the schoolmen were Ritualistic High Churchmen, the laics were in outward things reluctant conformists, and at heart precise dissenters. Under Elizabeth, whilst academicians preserved in cellars and secret closets the copes and sacred paraphernalia of the old religion, the populace was fiercely Protestant. When the Marian persecutors burnt the Anglican bishops outside the walls of Bocardo, the Beaumont was thronged with burgesses who prayed in silence for the dying prelates.

From the earliest dates of Oxford's academic story the citizens are found in continual feud with the scholars. They quarrelled about municipal privileges, prices of provisions, rents of scholastic houses, trifles of etiquette. One of their earliest quarrels

was about the rents which scholars were required to pay for abodes of which the landlords were laics; and the termination of this acrimonious dispute shows that the citizens were not without substantial grounds for jealousy of and dissatisfaction with the university.

In the middle of the thirteenth century the scholastic inns were for the most part the property of citizens. Here and there might be found an hotel whose principal was its owner; but the Oxonian schoolmaster usually hired of an unlearned laic the dwelling in which he received his boarders.

In proportion as the university flourished, house property rose in value; whereupon the laical landlords were so shamefully extortionate as to raise their rents, and impudently declare that they had a right to the full annual value of their houses. The schoolmasters were filled with amazement and fury at demands which, they averred, were at direct variance with equity and the everlasting fitness of things. In reply to the landlords who said, 'Pay higher rents or give up your halls to persons who will give more for the use of them,' the principals answered that, though rent was by its very nature a thing obnoxious to the philosophic mind, and scarcely to be endured, they would consent to pay the rent fixed in days when house property was comparatively valueless, but would neither vacate

their habitations nor pay a groat more for the occupancy of them. Of course the question was altogether between the landlords and principals; but the 'inmates' were quick to conceive that the proprietors were bent on picking their pockets; and it appeared to the most excitable of them that, unless the extortioners would listen to reason and justice, it would be necessary to cut the throat of every landlord in Oxford.

Yet further, while the scholars had been absent from Oxford owing to causes already mentioned in this work, the landlords found their houses relinquished by tenants who had made no arrangement for the payment of rents during their temporary withdrawal from Alma Mater. Under these circumstances, the greedy proprietors had actually taken possession of the vacant halls, and let them to laical creatures who were eager to pay for such comfortable quarters much higher rents than the dwellings had ever before yielded. 'Was such insolence ever before imagined?' cried the scholars, when they returned from Northampton and other towns, and saw their ancient homes filled with new tenants. Was such villany possible in human kind? What punishment was too severe for the owners of house property who, thus violating the plainest rules of morality, ventured to affirm that they were free to fix their own rents and choose their own

tenants from the crowd of competitors for their dwellings?

In their trouble the ejected tenants went to the king (Henry the Third), who, with royal munificence and superb prodigality of what was not his to give away, decreed that the scholars were almost entirely in the right, and that the landlords were no less in the wrong. If a schoolmaster had ever hired a house, it was quite unreasonable that he should ever be turned out of it. If a landlord had ever let a house to a scholar, it was clear that from that time forth it became a scholastic inn, and could not be lawfully let to any laical individual so long as a schoolmaster had need of it. Yet further, should it be occupied by a laic, in the absence of scholars wishing to inhabit it, the king ordained that, so soon as it should be required again for scholastic purposes, the owner should put it at the service of the scholars, even though to do so he would be under the necessity of ejecting a good tenant, or of withdrawing himself from the shelter of its roof. 'Once an inn, always an inn,' so long as or whenever academicians wished to use it as an inn, was the principle which the sovereign enunciated for the settlement of the main point in dispute.

With respect to the landlords' claim to derive advantage from an increase in the value of an inn occupied by scholars, the king was not altogether

regardless of proprietorial right; but he deprived the owner of his ancient power to raise the rent of his property. The landlord should not be precluded from getting a fair payment for the accommodation of his hotel; but what that fair payment should be was referred to the arbitrament of a board of taxers, consisting of two townsmen and two members of the university, who were empowered to inspect periodically the inns which belonged to burgesses, and to fix the rents which the scholastic tenants should be obliged to pay for them.

Compelled to submit to a decree which certainly savoured of spoliation, the civic landlords nursed a bitter grudge against the university which had procured so arbitrary a curtailment of their proprietorial powers. That the taxers discharged their invidious duties with honesty is probable; but it is by no means likely that their appraisements afforded satisfaction to the laical inn-owners. Disputes about rent, however, were neither the most important nor most irritating of the many differences which occasioned mutual jealousies and resentments between town and gown, and resulted in innumerable riotous excesses.

Nor may it be inferred, from what I have said of Oxonian pugilism, that when the academicians and townspeople came to blows, fists were the only weapons used by the belligerents. On the contrary,

whether they fought within the walls of the city or in the fields of the Beaumont, the combatants were frequently armed with cudgels, cross-bows, knives, daggers, swords, battle-axes. In unanticipated rencontres they struck out with right and left; and even in battles for which preparation had been made, many of the more stalwart or less affluent rioters relied chiefly or altogether for safety and victory on their mastery of the fistic science; but in the grander and more disastrous battles many of the foemen of both sides were provided with military weapons and accoutrements, and marched to the field of contention in compact companies.

The frequency with which the scholars of the fifteenth century employed murderous weapons in their quarrels with each other, and with the citizens, may be seen from the statute which specifies the pecuniary penalties attached to the more common breaches of the Chancellor's peace. By this enactment the masters of the university decreed that every scholar guilty of threatening a fellow-student with bodily harm should be fined twelve pence, and that the pupil convicted of bearing arms in defiance of several prohibitions should pay a mulct of two shillings. The student who committed an assault, by pushing with the shoulder or striking with the fist, was liable to a mulct of four shillings; but if he had inflicted a blow upon an adversary with a stone or

a cudgel, he could not escape from indignant justice under a sum of six shillings and eightpence. To strike an enemy with sword, long knife, short knife, dagger, battle-axe, or other warlike implement, was an offence to be atoned for by a payment of ten shillings. A fine of twenty shillings was the punishment assigned to every scholar who carried in public a bow and arrow with intent to do evil with them. Disturbers of the peace, who gathered together in masses, whether armed or without military weapons, were punishable with fines of thirty shillings on each offender; and every academic rioter who ventured to resist the officers of justice was liable to a mulct of forty shillings,—a sum which few scholars of any pre-Reformation time could have paid without serious inconvenience.

To those who fail to realize the conditions and incidents of social life in feudal England it may occasion amazement to learn that the youthful followers of peaceful arts were allowed to be in possession of warlike implements which they were continually using against the peace of the university. But wonder vanishes when it is remembered that in the England of olden time it was neither usual nor safe for men to make long journeys without arms of some sort wherewith to defend themselves against the desperadoes of the forests and the highways. Even so late as the close of the seventeenth century, when

the sword of the civic dandy had become little more than a decorative toy, it was customary for barristers and other circuiteers to ride from one assize town to another in mass, armed with weapons of offence and defence, and prepared for encounters with organized bands of robbers. And in the strictly feudal ages, when the fashion of wearing arms was much more general, the necessity for using them was much more frequent than in the Stuart period.

It was a matter of course that the scholar of a Yorkshire or Welsh homestead wore arms of some kind for his personal safety, on the journey from his father's dwelling to the university. Whether he walked or rode, whether he journeyed with two or three companions, or was one of a more numerous party of students, he carried a weapon for honour's sake and his mind's peace, as well as for bodily security. His weapon might be the bow which he had learnt to use against the butts of his native village; the trusty sword which had been an heirloom in his family for generations; a big dagger which he had bought from a friar's pack on the eve of his departure from home; a murderous club cut from an oak-tree; or such a pike as a common soldier of the period trailed at the heels of his squire. Even the little urchins of the grammar-schools who rode their sturdy nags, in companies of tens and twenties, from their homes to Oxford, under the protection of

trusty guardians, had long knives at their belts and big cudgels in their hands. The university forbade students to carry their weapons within the chancellor's jurisdiction, in the streets or on the Beaumont, when they took their daily air and exercise. They were forbidden to bring their arms out of their inns, either by day or by night, unless they were starting for a journey into the country. But it was never at any time designed by academic disciplinarians to prohibit them from bringing to their inns the weapons which safety required them to carry on their way to the university.

One of the earliest, if not the first, of the statutes against the bearing of arms merely forbade scholars to carry weapons in the university for an evil purpose—'*causâ mali perpetrandi*;' and when experience had shown the need for a more stringent rule, the academic law-makers, whilst forbidding scholars to carry their weapons by day or night on any pretext whatever, made an express exception in favour of persons passing through the town straight to their inns on their arrival from the country, and persons marching straight out of town into the rural districts. 'Ne quis amodo,' runs the statute, A.D. 1313, against weapon-bearers, 'de die vel de nocte arma quoquo modo portare præsumat, de remotis venientibus, et ad remota exeuntibus, et ad hos-

pitia se transferentibus inhabitandi causa, duntaxat exceptis.'

Hence it came to pass that the chamber occupied by two or three Oxonians of the feudal period usually contained, in addition to its slender supply of books and furniture, a display of weapons that would now-a-days be thought singularly out of place in a student's rooms. Hence also it followed that the inns always contained a considerable quantity of arms on which riotous students could lay their hands at times of extraordinary commotion. The frequency with which the scholars seized their arms, and in defiance of academic law used them in the riots of the university, may appear a reason why their weapons should have been taken from them by an officer on their arrival from the country, on an understanding that the instruments would be restored to them on their departure from the seat of learning. But grave considerations forbade such a course. The occasions were frequent, when an inn and its inmates would have been at the mercy of a furious mob of scholastic rivals or vindictive burghers, had they been deprived of their martial implements. Moreover, though the rulers of the university were at pains to restrain scholars from an imprudent display or dangerous abuse of their weapons, they were well pleased that the armed citizens

should know that the scholars also had arms which they could use on an emergency.

So, whilst the dons had their battle-axes and trusty swords, the artists of inferior degree were allowed to be the custodians of their bows and javelins. In fact, the students of old time, so long as they refrained from flagrant abuse of their privileges, always had their weapons within sight and reach. Even the chubby-cheeked boy of an Oxford grammar-hall had his bit of steel which, in times of riot, he dreamed of plunging into the fat body of the vendor of sweetmeats who had impudently declined to supply him with toffy on tick.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEATH TO THE LEGATE'S COOK.

As I should weary and exasperate my readers, and occasion a perilous buoyancy in the printing trade, if I were to muddle this cup of new thought and old story with minute Homeric mention of all the academic turmoils and battles, which quickened the life and smashed the bones of mediæval Oxonians, I select for special description three chief riots, the causes and incidents of which are strongly illustrative of the mode and spirit in which the scholars of Oxford rowed with a broad, long before they took to rowing with a softer o. The disturbance which sprung out of Cardinal Otho's arrival at Oseney Abbey; the grand Town and Gown Row of the year 1297; and the famous riot of St. Scholastica's Day, are the three supreme shindies that shall be used to recall the ancient valour of England's scholars, and yield materials for three separate chapters.

The fourth decade of the thirteenth century

was working towards its end, when, hearing that the schoolmasters' guild had become a big thing, and, having for many years called itself an university, was busily acting as such, Pope Gregory the Ninth came to the conclusion that it was high time for him to assert his right to influence the action and participate in the prosperity of the learned corporation. The pontiffs had contributed no more than Alfred the Great to the establishment and popularity of the schools, which, had they failed to achieve success, would have attained no more of papal than of princely patronage. But when it seemed probable that the association of teachers would endure and grow rich, the successor of St. Peter was moved by his paternal love of mankind to offer the guild his protection and beneficent advice, — to endow the schoolmasters with his munificent permission to do what they had been doing for generations without his leave, —and to annex their organization to the ecclesiastical system of which he was managing director.

The friars had for some years been very busy in School Street, demonstrating that 'Universitas' would never be a thorough success until the Mendicants were her governors; and not a few of the older kinds of regular clergy—at the instigation of their loyalty to a foreign potentate, and their consistent jealousy of the secular priesthood — had

co-operated with the friars in urging the father of the universal Church to assert his natural and divine right to appropriate what did not belong to him, and make himself lord paramount of the university which had sprung into being and gradually attained power without his assistance, and had, moreover, shown itself more desirous to avoid than court his favour.

To the monks and friars Gregory, with a quick perception of all the peculiar features of the case, responded with courtesy and pious fervour, that since the University of Oxford had been pleased to grow into what it would be worth his while to patronize, he conceived it to be his duty forthwith to promote the interests of the academy, and satisfy himself respecting the moral and intellectual condition of its youthful multitude. From all that the holy father had heard of his university of Oxford, it was clear that the schoolmasters had sore need of his special observation; and of all the symptoms, which demonstrated a necessity for his prompt and vigorous interference in their affairs, the most significant and conclusive was, that they had never even asked him to trouble himself about their business. He would forthwith despatch a trusty agent,—an Italian, whose national rearing and prejudices peculiarly qualified him to reform an English seminary,—and would

order him to visit Oxford, examine into the faults of her discipline, ascertain the vices of her multitudinous pupils, and draw her, as it were, under the pontifical wing. Whereto, the friars and monks responded with a hum of approval, and an unanimous declaration that the pontifical beneficence rendered them, in the highest degree, hopeful for Oxford.

The trusty agent, whom the pope selected for the accomplishment of his paternal purpose to his beloved university, was Otho, 'Deacon-Cardinal of St. Nicholas's Chapel on Tully's dungeon or the Tullianum,' who was instructed that, under cover of inquiring into the vices of the English clergy, he should play the part of a pontifical commissioner appointed to look into the state of learning and morals within the lines of the schoolmasters' guild, which was neither of clerical origin nor of ecclesiastical constitution, though a considerable proportion of its council and livery were in holy orders. Should the scholars manifest any indisposition to submit to his authority, on the ground that their corporation was a purely laical brotherhood, authorized by royal charter, and having none of those qualities which rendered ecclesiastical corporations amenable to Roman law, the emissary was instructed to reply that, by virtue of powers derived from a munificent pontiff, he would gra-

ciously overlook the defects of their society's origin, and assume that it had been ecclesiastical. For every objection, that could be anticipated by a gentleman about to poke his nose into another person's business, the legate was provided with an appropriate response. To any malapert scholar who should stigmatize him as an intruder, he was instructed to reply, 'You are another.' Should any numerous body of Oxonians revile him contumaciously for being an Italian, he was authorized to respond, 'Granted; what of it?' In case the academicians should break out in general and impious rebellion against his just and divine authority, he might curse the whole university with bell, book, and candle,—the consequences of which spirited line of action were too awful to contemplate.

It was the immortal Blucher who, on leading his infantry into action, told them in curt and pithy words to make short and sure work of the enemy by firing at their—at the lowest line of their waistcoats. Otho—who, though he failed to accomplish his mission, reflected no discredit on the pontiff's choice of a representative,—aimed at the same part of his antagonist. He entered England with the intention of carrying his point by forcible appeal to human stomachs. Knowing that an ambassador under difficult circumstances has overcome half the obstacles to his success, when

he has provided himself with the means of giving unusually good dinners, he was extremely careful in making culinary preparation for the campaign, and on reaching the vicinity of Oxford he had in his train a strong regiment of cooks, whose *chef* was the legate's own brother. Instructed to be especially careful about his gravies, this almost sacred artist in meat was ordered to look sharp lest any traitorous varlet should mistake fox-glove for sage and verdigris for onions, whilst compounding forcemeat for any goose or other viand designed for the ambassador's personal consumption.

The intelligence that a papal legate was on his way to England, to correct the vices of the clergy and the university of Oxford, occasioned an angry ferment amongst the seculars and laity of the academy. By the extraordinary cheerfulness of their looks, and the unusual brightness of their eyes, the friars justified the general suspicion that they had instigated the Pope to meddle in matters which lay outside his proper province. 'The whole thing,' exclaimed the indignant seculars and other scholars antagonistic to the regular clergy, 'was the latest dodge of the beggar-priests to get the government of the university into their hands.' The friars strove to keep their own counsel, and, whilst professing satisfaction at the beneficent action of the Holy Father, averred that so far as they knew it was

purely spontaneous. It was the baseless calumny of their malignant adversaries, which represented that the papal interference had been procured by the ambition and intrigue of the Mendicants.

On his way from the coast to Oseney Abbey, where he had resolved to abide whilst visiting the university, Otho had learned that there was a strong disposition in the anti-papal Oxonians to treat him with disrespect—even to the length of pelting him with rotten eggs, or tweaking his nose, or flinging him into the river; and on entering the abbey he gave stringent orders to his door-porter to refuse all callers who showed any signs of turbulence, or presented themselves without proper letters of introduction.

In the mean time the Oxonian scholars and lay-scholars had come to the conclusion that duty and prudence required them to pay their respects to the legate in a manner which would show him their numerical importance, unanimity, and perfect organization. They would have 'a monster demonstration'—would march to the abbey 'in fours,' and assure him of the respect which they entertained for him and his master. At one of the preliminary meetings of the demonstrators certain wily seculars, who had formed themselves into a committee for managing the enterprise, went to and fro amongst the malcontent scholars, whispering that since the

demonstration was meant to be a friendly affair, and was designed not to 'terrorize,' but only to 'impress' the Roman ambassador, it would be most injudicious and reprehensible should any student taking part in the procession *display* arms. The exhibition of arms could only prove injurious to the university. Therefore no weapons should be displayed; and if any scholar deemed it necessary for his personal safety to carry a cross-bow, a knife, or a satchel full of big stones, decency and policy enjoined that he should conceal his martial fittings under his academic robe, or other dress. The hint was taken.

In accordance with the etiquette of the period, the scholars announced their intention of calling on the legate Otho, by sending beforehand to the abbey liberal presents of liquors and viands, so that his highness should be able to entertain them hospitably, and without excessive cost to himself, as morning callers of their social importance were usually entertained in the thirteenth century. What these presents were history has omitted to state precisely; but there is reason to believe that they comprised several hampers of Oxford sausages, which the legate's brother eyed with suspicion; several hundreds of pots of marmalade, without which confection no Oxonian breakfast-table can 'ever have been thought perfectly furnished; and a chronometer of rude construction, provided at the cost of the

inhabitants of Blownorton, in Norfolk, as an appropriate gift to an important personage bent on minding his own business, and leaving the rest of mankind to manage their private affairs.

Anyhow the presents were not rejected disdainfully; and when the procession of demonstrating scholars arrived at the entrance of the Guests' Hall of Oseney Abbey, they cherished the very fallacious hope that, whatever else came of the morning call, they would at least receive the legate's smooth speech and welcome to a cold collation. Their expectation, however, was rudely shattered and dispersed by a gigantic porter, of Italian race and offensive intonation, who on opening the door to their summons, "spoke with a loud voice after the Roman fashion (by no means fit and opportune in this solemnity), and rudely asked them their business, what they would have, and what they came for. To which the scholars gave answer, 'That they might approach the presence of the lord legate, and offer him their devoirs; for they confidently believed that they should be received with honour, forasmuch as they had before sent in their presents. But the said porter speaking tauntingly to them, denied entrance with great haughtiness and scorn." The incidents to which Antonius à Bosco thus points in language befitting the historian's dignity, I imagine to have been just

these. To the knocking and kicking against the door of the Guests' Hall, whereby the peaceful scholars proclaimed their desire to enter, the porter, on opening the wicket, and speaking in the Roman fashion, demanded, 'Well, now, what are you doing here?' 'Doing?' answered the students. 'We have come out to Oseney to call on the lord legate.' 'Have you?' retorted the official. 'Then you may go back again without seeing the lord legate.' 'What! you have taken our presents,' cried the students, 'and treat us in this way! Your lord legate is a nice fellow. He has housed the grub, and won't give us a crust in return. That is just like an Italian.' To which—still speaking in the Roman fashion—the porter responded, 'Bless your impe-rence; my lord legate take your trash; not a bit of it. The abbot's swineherd gave your presents to his pigs. There, get out with you! You're a low lot.'

At length had arrived the moment when the students, who were smart fellows in pugilism, or who had profited by the hint against the impro-priety of displaying arms, made themselves famous in their generation. They made a rush at the porter, laid him sprawling on his back, and walked over his prostrate body into the Guests' Hall. The Italians inside drew their swords, but were unable to repel the mob of roaring boys and muscular

schoolmasters, who speedily carried the reception-rooms, and put themselves in a position to entertain the legate himself.

For a few minutes the shindy was universal and sanguinary. Claret was tapped, eyes were blackened, heads were broken in every direction. The Italian soldiers of the legate's guard wished themselves safe back in the south, when the storming party raised the cry of, 'On to the kitchen; we'll see what our lord's legate is going to have for dinner.' Whereupon the struggle was transferred to the culinary chambers of the religious house, and some smart fighting came off amongst the pots and pans. But the chief cook,—Otho's own brother—was a terrible and unscrupulous adversary. Had he possessed a store of Greek fire, this diabolical *chef* would have flung it on the compact mass of students, and have perished together with them in the ruins of his own kitchen. Irritated by the jeering voice of an Irish scholar, who with polite importunity asked him for a warm plate of soup and a mug of wine, the Satanic miscreant, instead of bestirring himself to minister to the physical comfort of the Hibernian chaplain, 'took scalding liquor out of a caldron wherein some fat meat had been newly boiled, and cast it into his face.' A cry for vengeance arose from the scholars of, 'Down with him! Up with him! Fling him in the big cop-

per, and boil him into soup!' In another instant a Welsh scholar, sympathizing with his cousin from the Emerald Isle, drew his bow, and shot the superlative cook dead as a door-nail. It is not said whether the scholars proceeded to boil him; but the total silence of history respecting the Italian caitiff's sepulture is circumstantial evidence in favour of the suggestion that the ferocious Oxonians cooked the cook, and then ate him.

For the whole day the scholars remained masters of the entire abbey, with the exception of the church-tower, to which the legate on the first outbreak of the riot had fled, after putting on his canonical cope—the priest's proper defence against the blows of aggressors. But at night-fall, the arrival of a strong body of soldiers, despatched from Abingdon by Henry the Third, to protect the legate's person, freed the papal intruder from his turret, but not from his consternation and alarm. The commander of the soldiers urged the terrified ecclesiastic to take horse instantly, and, under the protection of a military escort, make his way with all possible speed to Abingdon, where the sovereign of the realm would receive him with open arms. Whereupon the Italian, for his still greater safety, put on all his canonical vestments, and having thrown his legs over 'pig-skin,' trotted away from Oseney with a gallant bevy of knights, covering his retreat, but having no power

to silence the cries of the academic rioters, who screamed after the flying ambassador, that he was a usurer, simoniac, plunderer of rents, and in divers other respects—such as greed for money, and designs against the commonwealth—an execrably bad fellow.

The riot was at an end, but the row had only just begun. Whilst the outraged legate was on his way, 'puffing and blowing, to the king, then with his court at Abendon Abbey,' the scholars returned to Oxford; and ere the Italian ambassador had completed to the king and royal court, with many 'tears and sighs,' the grievous story of the insults offered at Oseney to the holy church in his person, the Oxonians had cooled down, and were beginning to say to one another, 'Shan't we catch it nicely with bell, book, and candle? We should not have gone quite so far; but that Italian porter and cook were enough to enrage all the bishops of Christendom.'

Much was done by the authorities in the way of interdicting and cursing.

First, at the king's command, the bishops of Winchester and Chichester, assisted by the abbots of Evesham and Abingdon, summoned the whole university, and the chief persons of the civic municipality, to St. Frideswyde's church, and there, beneath the sacred roof, announced that the university was suspended, *i.e.*, that no lectures or academic

exercises might be delivered or performed in the schools.

Soon afterwards, the legate, deriving great advantages from a temporary humiliation, asserted his right, in the face of all England, to interfere in the affairs of the university. He solemnly and deliberately, on the strength of powers committed to him from above, cursed the whole university, and caused English priests to curse her. The schools and the guild were placed under interdict, and all scholastic persons who had taken any part in the riot were excommunicated; and as an old Oxonian, sensitive for the ancient honour of my Alma Mater, it grieves me to record that amongst the academicians, thus publicly excommunicated and cursed, and tintinnabulated 'with bell, book, and candle in every place in Oxford,' were such respectable and august persons as Masters of Arts, beneficed clergymen, doctors, and —the chancellor of the university himself. Until our army went to Flanders in the eighteenth century, no such swearer as pious Otho had ever appeared in Christendom since the thirteenth age.

Not caring to remain in Oxford, where they were forbidden to pursue their studies, and where the maledictory condition of the atmosphere might cause them to break out in boils and blains, the students, who were students no longer, thought they might as well go home to their anxious

friends. But they had no sooner passed sentence of rustication against themselves, and begun to 'skedaddle,' than Henry the Third,—that egregious fosterer of letters and promoter of learning,—'sent his breve forthwith, prohibiting that none under severe corporal punishment should depart, unless they had license from him so to do.' Of the students, who had previously departed from Alma Mater's bounds, many were apprehended in various parts of the country, and clapt in divers prisons. The ringleaders of the riot were kept in irons, and on penal diet for several months; and whilst the university was thus humiliated, and sworn against, and constrained to eat ashes, the legate rode triumphantly about the land, and was treated as though he were the apple of the king's eye.

After awhile, however, the legate's wrath abated, and national sympathy revived for the scholars, who had their strong friends in high places. Their cause had never been relinquished by the *English* bishops—not the bishops who delighted to kiss the papal toe, and were Romans in heart, though English by blood; but the stout prelates of true John Bull stuff, who believed heartily in the Catholic Church, but made significant movements with their tongues whenever they heard the Bishop of Rome unduly extolled. And when the excitement caused by the riot had

subsided, these patriotic prelates 'stood up stiffly for the university,' and grand old Bishop Grossteste—a divine whose name may be spelt in as many different ways as Shakespeare, Wycliffe, and Cholmondeley—said that, as for cursing and interdicting, he could curse and interdict as bravely as any prelate in Christendom, and if he were provoked to do so, he would excommunicate every person who, in the recent disturbances, had laid violent hands on an Oxonian. Ay, more, these most commendable of mitred ecclesiastics spoke out boldly that England, thank heaven, did not belong to the Pope of Rome, and was not a petty province to be ruled over by such a minion as the legate Otho, the incivility and sauciness of whose Italian servants had been the sole cause of the little disturbance at Oseney, when the wonderful ambassador had lost his cook and his courage at the same moment.

Whereby legate Otho saw that he had gone a little too far in wreaking his spite against the university; and he sought to creep out of his embarrassing position, by summoning the excommunicated Oxonians to assemble at St. Paul's in London, and march barefooted, and without the caps and gowns, through the London streets in demonstration of their penitence,—on which exhibition of remorse he would accord them his

forgiveness. This procession of penitents took place, and the comedy of it was heightened by the presence of the bishops, who, after bearding the mighty Otho, joined in the throng of suppliants for his forgiveness.

Whereupon, Otho removed the interdict from Oxford, and prudently refrained from further attempts to reform the university, which he had cursed by deputy, and by his own power of execratory speech.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GREAT RIOT OF 1297.

'THIS year arose a grievous discord between the Clerks and Laics of Oxford, occasioned by the fighting of two servants of several countries that were upon some small occasion invited thereunto. While each person laboured to express his manhood, for the repute of his country, the quarrel was at length translated to those that were standers-by and abettors of the quarrel. Towards the end the riot did so much increase that all clerks and laics coming out of their houses, each party gathered into a body to fight.' With these words Antony Wood prefaces his stirring narrative of the great Town and Gown Row of 1297, on the authority of Thomas Walsingham, who, though he erred in attributing the riot to so slight a cause as a casual fight between two serving-men, was guilty of no injustice to the moral condition of the schools and their frequenters, at a time when the accidental disagreement of two obscure

persons was quite enough to ignite the highly combustible elements of academic opinion, and occasion a conflict of all the hostile sections of the university.

For weeks the mutual animosities of town and gown had been gathering heat and force, and had resulted in such assaults and minor affrays, as were the usual premonitory symptoms of a grand and unusually destructive eruption of the volcanic passions of the learned community. On the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, three members of the university—two clerks, John de Skarf and Madoc of Wales, and Michael, the manciple of the clerks living at Bolehall, St. Aldate's, had provoked a sanguinary disturbance, and caused the death of an important townsman, whose murder had roused in the citizens an eager yearning for vengeance.

At the time for lighting candles, Michael, the manciple, and his two confederates, armed with swords and bows, passed through several of the streets of the city, yelling loudly, and inviting all valiant townsmen to come out and fight them. Such invitation was not likely to be unanswered at a crisis, when the scholars and citizens were differing with extraordinary vehemence and rancour about the prices of food, and their respective titles to social esteem; and ere the three roaring cre-

ators of disturbance had gathered to their assistance half a hundred pugilistic students, John Metescharp, a courageous laic, had hastily summoned a few friends, who, together with their leader, rushed into the thoroughfares, to keep the king's peace by breaking the turbulent academicians' heads. But death encountered the heroic Metescharp, and touched him rudely ere he achieved aught worthy of historic honours. Michael the manciple drew his bow, and aiming with a precision that perhaps occasioned him no less surprise than remorse, pinked the luckless Metescharp in a vital part. Borne from the field of battle by his comrades, the wounded burgher expired within forty-eight hours; and ere justice could apprehend his murderers, they had quitted their inns, and gone on a reading-party to Wales.

Some fourteen or twenty-one days elapsed, during which nothing more grievous occurred than a few murderous assaults, when on a certain Friday the scholars turned out in considerable numbers from their inns, and the burghers in corresponding force quitted their houses, both sides displaying arms and uttering menaces, which left no doubt as to their purpose. But by the prompt interference of the chancellor, who was desirous that the inevitable battle should not be fought prematurely, the riot was stayed for a few hours. Oxford was again in

commotion on Saturday, when some smart fighting occasioned several awkward casualties in the ranks of either army. But on the evening of the next day, the aldermen and other chief personages of the town carried by assault and sacked several scholastic houses within the walls; and having destroyed much property in buildings, furniture, and books, the victorious townsmen marched out towards the Beaumont and gained an easy triumph over the scholars who had their settlements beyond the northern gate.

The actual battle having thus begun on a day which our feudal ancestors regarded as especially favourable to martial enterprises, it was fought out with terrible vehemence on the morrow. By dawn on Monday the bell of St. Martin's church and the braying of the civic cornets or ox-horns called the townsmen to arms; and whilst the burghers were donning harness and seizing their bows, the loud ringing of the bells in the tower of St. Mary's Church stirred the hearts of some two or three thousand scholars with an announcement that the university looked to her children for defence. In either host it was felt that the conflict would be desperate and bloody. On the previous day the mayor and some of the less bellicose of the civic office-holders had urged the chancellor to co-operate with them in maintaining peace, by seizing all per-

sons who showed any disposition to turbulence, and keeping the scholars to their inns. But the chief of the university, who doubtless saw the position of affairs better than we can, and knew more of the mayor's little game than it is possible for us to discover, told the citizens that he could manage his own business without their assistance, and that he should not imprison, or suffer others to imprison, the scholars whose presence in the streets might be requisite to suppress an insolent populace. Hence there were grounds for the prevailing impression on Monday morning that lads on either side might before eve have cause to mourn many a fallen comrade, and be in urgent need of splints and sticking-plaister.

Nor were these alarming expectations falsified by the event.

The combatants actually engaged in the affair are said to have been some six thousand strong; and though we must regard with suspicion the statements of chroniclers, whose delight in big figures was only surpassed by their general ignorance of arithmetic, it is probable that the riot occupied for twelve hours the energies of nearly the whole male population of Oxford, as well as of several hundreds of rustic adventurers who, on hearing what was up, hastened from the surrounding villages to participate in the excitement and glory of a row which might, perhaps,

eventuate in a free fight of unprecedented magnitude.

The superior belligerents were armed from head to foot in mail, and the majority of the clerks made a display of weapons that would have been creditable in the martial levy of a feudal chief. Wearing bows and arrows, swords and bucklers, bills and axes, slings and knives, they paraded the principal thoroughfares of the town, singing in chorus that they were only maintaining the ancient way of the 'varsity, and repeatedly calling on their adversaries to follow them out to the Beaumont and fight in open field.

The commotion had gone thus far when the proctors—either from a sincere wish to maintain peace, or from a politic desire to postpone the fight until the academicians had completed their preparations for the conflict—caused their bellman to make the circuit of the town, and proclaim that the students should refrain from fighting till the noon of the following day. But the crier's bell and voice were powerless to assuage the fury and restrain the ardour of the academic troops.

At nine o'clock A.M. a terrific fight took place in the High Street, on the ground lying between the churches of All Saints and St. Mary, when the academic bowmen and slingers, ably supported by

light-infantry, that made several brilliant captures of wounded burghers, turned the tide of battle decidedly in favour of the university; whose warriors, after beating back the civic battalions, and for the moment driving them from the streets, broke open the shops and dwellings of the routed laics, and 'taking thence all the goods and chattels whatsoever they laid hands on, conveyed them away.' It was at this crisis, however, when the sudden and unlooked-for slaughter of the commander-in-chief of the scholastic forces rallied the drooping spirits of the town, and snatched the rose of victory from Alma Mater's ensanguined hand.

A beneficed clergyman—the rector, indeed, of the church of Pychelstorne—this dashing chieftain of the schools was no less splendid a warrior than Fulk de Nermyte, who, after breaking his trusty blade in the last of a series of heroic duels, had taken his bow from his shoulder, and shot away his last arrow, when he headed the storming party who burst into the residence of Edward de Erkelawe, or Hales, and Basilia, his wife, and made a clear sweep of the greater part of the said Edward's personal estate.

Indignant at proceedings which shivered his household gods and utterly destroyed his crockery, Edward de Erkelawe ran up to his solar room with a brave resolve to do great things or die in

that elevated and sunny chamber. Looking from the window of the solar, the outraged Erkelawe espied Fulk de Nermyte at a moment when the warrior of the schools had incautiously lowered his buckler. Seizing the occasion, and turning it to disastrous account, the valiant householder, whose name suggests an Heracleidan descent, drew his bow with a strong arm, and sent an unerring shaft clean into the redoubtable Fulk de Nermyte's left eye. The chieftain was borne to his inn by a band of devoted followers; and ere two hours had passed, it was rumoured throughout the lines of the academic host that the rector of Pychelstorne would never again break down a burgher's outward door, and rifle his inner parlour.

Thrown into confusion and panic by the loss of their captain, the academicians retreated ignominiously before their foes, who, reinforced by the people pouring in from the adjacent country, avenged themselves terribly for injuries inflicted on them in battle, and for affronts put upon them by the university during several previous weeks. No list was preserved of the killed and wounded; but when large allowance has been made for the habitual exaggerations of marvel-loving chroniclers, it is clear that the conflict was attended with numerous atrocities, and occasioned the loss of several lives. Besides striking their foes to the ground, and

trampling on their prostrate bodies in the public ways, the victors, disregarding the laws of sanctuary, pursued the fugitives into the churches, whither they fled for safety, and dragged them from the altars, to which they extended suppliant hands. Thus torn from the places whose sacredness should have yielded them protection from further violence, the beaten scholars were driven with whips and goads to the tower-jail, and submitted to other and more repulsive kinds of maltreatment.

On the subsidence of strife, the more serious of the academic broils were usually followed by official inquiry into the causes of disturbance, and assignments of punishment to the principal offenders. It was thus that the great riot of 1297 was arranged decorously for its place in the annals of the university. Royal commissioners, after proper examination of witnesses, came to the conclusion that the town had grievously misconducted itself, and ought to eat a considerable amount of humble pie for the gratification and profit of the university. With due ringing of bells and artistic use of candles, the Bishop of Lincoln excommunicated all citizens who had taken part in the commotion against the scholars. The municipality was required to make important concessions to the guild of learning; and whilst some few of the principal burghers were thrown into prison, until the king or chancellor

should see fit to liberate them, others were deprived of their offices or banished the city. Moreover, the commonalty of the town were required to pay five pounds annually to a priest, who should say daily masses for the soul of Fulk de Nermyte, and other clerks slain in the battle.

After the promulgation of which retributive enactments the commissioners returned to their homes with the thanks of the university; the scholars crowed jubilantly as they went back to their books; and the burghers, with hearts full of gall, resolved to pay out their ancient enemies on the first opportunity.

CHAPTER XV.

IN HONOUR OF THE WISE AND SPOTLESS VIRGIN SAINT SCHOLASTICA.

LIKE the battle which was fought over the legate's soup-tureen and amidst the boilers of the Oseney Abbey kitchen, and the sanguinary conflict commemorated in the last chapter, the famous struggle which originated in the excitements at St. Scholastica's Feast was not one of those academic commotions, which, springing from passions of national politics, and stimulating the animosities of national parties, gave rise to the monkish rhymes,

> 'Chronica si penses ;
> Cum pugnant Oxonienses,
> Post paucos menses
> Volat ira per Angligenses :'

a piece of rhyming doggerel that was Englished into,

> 'Thus old story says :
> From our Oxford frays,
> After months and days,
> All England 's in a blaze.'

But though it proceeded from local feud, and kindled no fire that spread beyond the boundaries of the strictly local spites which occasioned the disturbance, St. Scholastica's fight—a conflict that lasted to the third day from its outbreak, and was attended with much rapine and bloodshed—is still recalled by Oxonians as one of the most obstinate battles ever fought within the limits of the university.

The ancient and implacable feud of Town and Gown had been exasperated by fresh insults and annoyances, exchanged by the two irreconcilable enemies, when on Tuesday, February 10, 1354, the passions of the burghers and scholars broke out into violent war, in the tap-room of the Swyndlestock tavern,—a house situated near the Quatervois, and known in later days by the sign and name of the Mermaid. Walter de Springheuse and Roger de Chesterfield, scholars of the university, together with a roystering company of academicians, had entered the Swyndlestock and ordered wine, which it was their pious and hilarious purpose to drink in honour of the learned virgin whose feast was then in course of celebration. The wine called for by the boys was drawn and put before them by the vintner, John de Croydon, who, after serving the liquor, waited to hear his guests' opinion of its quality. He was not kept long in suspense; for no sooner

had the scholars tasted the drink than they declared it to be abominably bad, and told their host that, if he valued the soundness of the outer tissues of his skull, he had better bestir himself and bring them a flagon from a better tap. Whereupon John de Croydon, resenting this noisy disparagement of his liquor, and deeming his manly honour aggrieved by the menaces of the fastidious drinkers, averred that the wine was sound and of good flavour,—and that its maligners, though they might be smart fellows at their lessons, knew nothing whatever of the nature and properties of fermented drinks. He even went so far, in 'giving them stubborn and saucy language,' as to suggest that wine was a thing about which they could not have had much experience. In his insolence, John spoke derisively of the extreme mildness and general acridity of the beer which the principals of inns served out to their young boarders. In fact, John de Croydon spoke so audaciously that Roger de Chesterfield—whose manners had not been softened and formed by an anxious father's letters on deportment and taste—raised the vessel of distasteful drink, and, after flinging the liquor in the vintner's face, threw the pot at his head. A free fight ensued, from which the scholars retreated, on the arrival of divers citizens, who thought that the

hour had arrived when the town was bound to assert its dignity by murdering a few scholars.

Ere another half-hour had passed the noise was deafening and the riot general. The town-bell was ringing in St. Martin's belfry, whilst the campanologists of St. Mary's Church were summoning the 'inmates' to arms. Townsmen, armed with bows and arrows, quickly formed themselves into regiments, and from every important inn within the Chancellor's jurisdiction there issued a stream of scholars, who had clutched their weapons on hearing the first notes of the Marian peal. It was an occasion when no scholar, however craven, could shirk the fight; for the chancellor of the university had been shot at by the civic bowmen, and, on seeing his powerlessness to still the commotion by pacific arts, the chief of the university had himself ordered that the great bell of St. Mary's should call his children to arms.

Some smart skirmishes ensued; but the afternoon closed in darkness before any of the combatants had been killed, or maimed, or mortally wounded; and on the approach of a black evening the commotion ceased for a few hours.

On the morrow the chancellor bestirred himself to prevent a renewal of the hostilities which had fortunately resulted in no serious casualties on the

previous day; and in his commendable efforts to maintain peace the chief of the university was supported—at least so far as words went—by the first magistrate of the city. Shortly after sunrise the scholars were summoned to St. Mary's Church, and enjoined by the rector of the schools to be guilty of no action calculated to irritate their adversaries to a commission of outrage. They were strictly forbidden to wear their weapons in the thoroughfares; and whilst this pacific proclamation was being delivered to the students, corresponding orders were given to the populace assembled at the Quatervois.

But though these measures were successful in deferring the conflict for yet another brief while, fighting became general immediately after 'the inmates' had dined. Indeed the first blows of the Wednesday's fight were delivered shortly before the customary dinner-time of the hotels, in a preliminary fray occasioned by a turbulent body of citizens who, armed with bows and arrows, forced their way into the Augustine Schools, and drove before them a master in divinity and a company of auditors who were performing an academic exercise. This event occurred '*circiter horam ordinariam*;' and ere the 'inmates,' occupying hotels within the walls of the city, had fairly completed the principal repast of the twenty-four hours, news came to them

that, whilst they had been at table, a bloody conflict had taken place on the Beaumont, between some fourscore burghers and a smaller number of scholars, in which the stronger battalion had gained an easy victory. For three furlongs' space the eighty civic bowmen had driven backwards the stubbornly resisting students, when the latter, no longer able to show a fair front to their assailants, wavered, fell into disorder, and fled precipitately to the Augustine Priory and the town-wall. In this affair one scholar had been killed, several mortally wounded, and others grievously hurt. Yet further, it was rumoured that the victors in this fray had sent messengers into the country, calling upon the rustics in the neighbouring villages to arm and hasten to the assistance of the commonalty of the town. In another hour the villagers would be pouring into the city, and the university would be at the mercy of her malignant foes.

Aroused to a perception of their imminent danger, the academicians hastened to their chambers for their weapons, and turned out into the streets, mad with rage and burning for vengeance. To prevent the rustics from joining in the contest until the university had brought all her forces to the ground of battle, some of the bolder and more prudent scholars made themselves masters of the gates on the northern and eastern sides of the city,

—a timely movement, which brought a considerable though transient advantage to the gownsmen; for, on reaching the town-wall, the rustics found the gates closed against them, and they were compelled to make a fatiguing circuit to the West Gate ere they could effect a combination with their allies.

From noon till dusk 'town' and 'gown' fought stoutly with fists, clubs, bows, and bills; and when the struggle had endured for several hours, the spectator would have found difficulty in deciding to which of the two armies victory inclined. But before the disappearance of daylight the contest was decided by the villagers, who, having entered the city by the West Gate in a compact mass, numbering (if the chroniclers may be trusted) nearly two thousand, hastened towards the scene of strife with an uproar of ferocious cries and threats. 'Slay, slay,' 'Havock and havock,' 'Smite fast and give good knocks,' were amongst the exclamations with which the rural folk encouraged one another, as they moved at double-quick up the High Street, in rear of the 'black dismal flag,' which was their only and terrifying banner.

Reanimated by the appearance of their friends, the townsmen made one more impetuous charge upon their enemy, who, overpowered by numbers, broke, fled, and dispersed. The beaten academicians ran to the nearest of the scholastic halls,

whose gates were shut against the surging mob so soon as they had received the majority of the flying students. But there were several hotels of which the townsmen made themselves masters; and in these inns, partially if not altogether deserted by their customary occupants, the conquering rabble gave full play to their destructive propensities. No less than five inns thus fell into the hands of the citizens, who pillaged their contents—from the books and furniture of their students' chambers to the provisions in their larders and the culinary utensils of their kitchens. After satiating their appetites with the victuals and wine, which had thus fallen into their hands, the triumphant rioters flung the remainder of the food out of window, and poured barrels of good liquor into the adjacent streets. The captured inns were gutted, stripped, and utterly despoiled; and in more than one of them fire was employed to complete the work of outrage and destruction. With the fall of night the riot lulled and died down; whereupon the authorities of the town and university took courage to pass through the darkened streets, proclaiming in the king's name that whosoever, being in the possession of riches, injured the scholars or their goods, should atone for his crime with forfeiture commensurate to the damage caused by his wantonness.

On the morrow, in obedience to a summons which required them to appear before the King at Woodstock, the chancellor of the university and the most notable of the Oxonian principals set out before break of dawn for the royal palace; and scarcely had they proceeded a mile beyond the town-wall when the bell of St. Martin's Church assembled the citizens, whom the riot of the previous day had filled with a desire to commit further outrages against the university.

A fearful fight ensued, in which the infuriated burghers,—not content with beating and murdering gownsmen who opposed them in the streets, and with rushing into the hotels whose entrances had not been closed, by the use of bars and engines—forced open the gates of several academic dwellings, the occupants of which were bent on avoiding a renewal of the fray. Fourteen inns were thus captured and sacked between the sunrise and sunset of Thursday by the rioters, who, besides slaying several gownsmen, perpetrated atrocious cruelties on the persons of their disabled antagonists. It is even recorded that the citizens so far exceeded their customary barbarousness as to declare their contempt of the priestly tonsure by scalping some chaplains who fell into their hands. 'The crowns of some chaplains, viz. all the skin,' says Antony Wood, 'so

far as the tonsure went, these diabolical imps flayed off in scorn of their clergy.'

One would like to attribute this revolting atrocity to the imagination of the chronicler, whose fervid and not severely accurate pen furnished the particulars from which the antiquarian of the seventeenth century made up the greater part of his graphic narrative of the riot. But even if we are justified in doubting whether the priestly heads really received the distinctions of Red Indian warfare, it cannot be denied that the barbarities which marked the academic riots of mediæval Oxford —the conflicts between rival scholastic factions, no less than the struggles between gownsmen and citizens—afford countenance to a statement which would have us believe that, in their fiercest moods, some of our feudal ancestors were capable of acts which we are apt to regard as excesses peculiar to the savages of Transatlantic prairies.

For instance, so late as 1389, when the Welsh and Southern Oxonians combined against the Northern Academicians, and fought them on the Beaumont, the struggle of scholars against scholars resulted in exhibitions of violence, which demonstrate that learning does not necessarily mitigate the natural fierceness of human brutes. Not satisfied with their success in a battle which put their enemies at their

feet, the Northern conquerors followed up their victory by pillaging the Welsh inns and driving the Welsh students from their schools, and beyond the boundaries of the town. Shooting their arrows along the narrow lanes of old Oxford, the Northerners yelled after the flying Celts, 'War, war, war! It's the Walsh doggys and her whelyps:' and few only of the students, thus driven from the despoiled houses, were permitted to escape beyond the wall, until they had been severally subjected to disgusting indignities. 'But being not content with that,' says the historian, after describing how the Northerners compelled Welshman after Welshman to fall upon his knees at one or another of the civic gates, and to kiss their defiled masonry, 'they, while the said Welshmen stooped to kiss it, would knock their heads against the gates, in such an inhuman manner that they would force blood out of the noses of some, and tears from the eyes of others.'

Either because the fury of the townsmen had thoroughly spent itself, or because troops were sent from Woodstock to guard the scholars from further outrage, the battle of St. Scholastica was not renewed on Friday. When an imperfect list of the losses sustained in the conflict by the university had been prepared for the information of the Bishop of Lincoln, it made special mention of two priests, two lay scholars, a servitor, and a student

in clerical orders, whose corpses had been identified; two Irish priests and three lay scholars from Ireland, who had been wounded, so that no hope was cherished of their recovery; two English priests, an English deacon, and eight scholars of English race, who had been wounded to death; and four other members of the university — a priest and three laymen—who had been grievously wounded. In harmony with the spirit of the law, the reporters took no notice of trivial casualties,—such as fractures, dislocations, cuts, and contusions, involving no danger to life. But they certified that, in addition to the persons particularly mentioned as slain, or put in imminent peril, if not under the certainty of immediate death, there were many academicians who had fled to the country under circumstances which rendered it doubtful whether they had escaped destruction.

Of course the riot was followed by the customary investigations, interdictions, and ecclesiastical cursings. The Bishop of Lincoln, as he was in duty bound to do, scattered his letters of excommunication freely about the tranquillized town, whose unlearned residents, on resuming their customary industries, found themselves precluded from all beneficial participation in the rites of Holy Church—a punishment that was not, as Antony Wood admits, free from excessive severity against 'such good

people that made a conscience of religion,' and, without having been 'accessary to the conflict,' were maledicted, and rung into darkness, and denied the sacraments, as though they had been prime movers of the disturbance.

From a transcriber's error in a monkish chronicle there arose an erroneous impression that the mayor and chief burghers of Oxford were hung for winking at and even instigating this riot. But no such punishment befell the municipal chiefs. On the contrary, John de Bereford, the mayor, — who seems to have secretly encouraged whilst openly protesting against the commotion, — lived and enjoyed the world's respect for many years after the affray, and before his death distinguished himself by his piety and munificence to true churchmen and the one true church.

But though the mayor and aldermen escaped the punishment of strangulation, humiliation and penance were assigned to the city, after the removal of the interdict, by the operation of a compact, to which the municipal authorities gave their assent, and by which the mayor and bailiffs and sixty other chief citizens were required to attend mass at St. Mary's Church every year on St. Scholastica's day, and offer at the high altar a tribute of money in token of their sorrow for the evil wrought by the town on the occasion of the riot. By the conditions

of this agreement for perpetual compensation, each member of the penitential deputation was required to pay a penny after the performance of mass: and of the money thus raised it was directed that forty pence should go to the relief of the poor scholars, and the rest to the private purse of the incumbent of St. Mary's. In the 'Munimenta Academica Oxon.' edited by the Rev. Henry Anstey, may be found a copy of the singular indenture between the university and town, whereby the latter agreed to do, and the former consented to profit by, this annual penance.

To ensure the due fulfilment of the obligations of this agreement, the makers of the award constrained the citizens yet further to promise to pay annually to the university a fine of one hundred marks, and give the university a power to distrain upon their corporate property for the payment of the said yearly mulct,—which fine, however, the university bound itself, by another indenture, to forego yearly, if the citizens duly performed the other penitential obligations placed upon them in atonement for the turbulent doings of the town.

CHAPTER XVI.

KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL USED AS A PLAYHOUSE.

In mediæval days, long before our ancestors discovered that it was profane to use places of worship for the secular purposes for which they had been built, no less than for the religious ends to which they are still devoted, the churches were frequented by the multitude for amusement as well as spiritual edification, and were rendered serviceable to society in ways that would appear impious to most English people of the present generation.

In those days the parish church of a fairly populous town discharged by turns or simultaneously the functions of the Christian temple, the market-hall, the law-court, the theatre, the bazaar, and the lecture-room of the nineteenth century. The fairs of the rural districts were held in the immediate precincts and under the roofs of parish-churches, that were periodically thronged by crowds of pleasure-seeking and business-following rustics, who, as wake followed wake, flocked to one or another of

the various churches of their district, to find diversion or make money. Until Archbishop Stafford, in the middle of the fifteenth century, decreed throughout his province 'that fairs and markets should no more be kept in churches or churchyards on the Lord's days and other holy days, except in time of harvest,' the weekly markets and periodical fairs of feudal England were almost always held on sacred ground and beneath consecrated roofs; and, as the Archbishop's decree demonstrates, it was customary with our ancestors to hold them on Lord's days and other holy days. Though the primate's order permitted the churches to be used as market-rooms and bazaars on profane days, and even on holy days during times of harvest, it is certain that the prohibition of their use for secular business on holy days during the greater part of the year — a prohibition occasioned by the archbishop's respect for the Sabbatarians and religious zealots of his time — tended greatly to put down Sunday and holy-day markets, and to strengthen the growing sentiment that the churches were no fit places, and the Sundays no fit days, for public bazaars in any season of the year.

But long after Archbishop Stafford had gone to his rest, the people of Old England continued to turn their temples to account for purely secular purposes, after the fashion of their forefathers, who were wont

to use the churches as places of promenade and social jollity, as courts of justice, and warehouses for the safe-keeping of precious and perishable goods. In ages when robbers were more numerous than policemen, and when ordinary folk had no adequate means for the protection of their personal property within the bounds of their own premises, it was customary for farmers and merchants to rely on their parochial churches for the same security against rapine, which men of business in the nineteenth century derive from strong closets and well-guarded warehouses, and from the privilege of using their bankers' cellars. The farmer, whose barns afforded him no adequate protection against the perils of theft or storm, frequently stored his wool in his parish-church, whither his neighbours were in the habit of sending sacks full of wares and chests of valuable chattels, for the safe custody which was purchasable by moderate payments to the parish-priest. In fact, the church was the general warehouse of the parish,—and a right good warehouse too, when the most reckless robbers and desperate rascals of the land were usually so far under the influence of superstitious reverence for ecclesiastical bricks and mortar, and under superstitious dread of sacerdotal malediction, that they seldom ventured to violate sanctuary and commit

the awful crime of sacrilege, by laying hands on property committed to the care of Holy Church.

Whilst the nave or body of the church was thus made in fact as well as name the people's home, the chancel was set apart and jealously preserved for sacred uses. In fact, the mediæval church was a parochial club-house with a chapel attached,—being composed of a common room, in which men of all degrees did innocent business and took lawful pleasure, and a holy chamber, wherein the sacerdotal offices were duly discharged by priestly persons. And long after the common rooms of the national temples had ceased to be generally used as market-halls and warehouses, our pious ancestors deemed themselves guilty of no profane conduct in dealing with them as suitable places for social meeting and hilarious enjoyment. Funereal banquets—pompous and costly entertainments in mediæval society, when etiquette required that all the relatives and ordinary acquaintances of a dead man should be invited to witness his interment—frequently took place in the naves of churches, where it was also not unusual for wedding-parties to make merry after celebrations of marriage. The periodical jollifications of a mediæval parish—the wakes in commemoration of its particular saint, and the minor festivals on stated days—took place in the nave

and precinct of its sacred building. Holiday-makers at church-ales were entertained at tables, ranged in the body of their church, and loaded with all the customary materials of a jovial banquet. When the sympathizing neighbours of a bankrupt held a bid-ale, to raise a fund for his re-establishment in business, the feast, which had for its benevolent object the relief of human distress, was consumed in the nave of a holy house. In like manner, when private adversaries made up their quarrels over a love-feast, it was usual for them to invite their friends to some church, where the witnesses of the formal reconciliation partook of the good cheer, and heightened the hilarity of the banquet which proclaimed to the world that two men, lately fierce foes, had once again become firm friends.

The Reformation did so much to drive out of vogue this social use of the churches, that it is sometimes credited with having occasioned the universal and complete abolition of ecclesial customs which, however much they may have promoted social enjoyment and neighbourliness amongst our ancestors, are strongly repugnant to existing notions of Christian orderliness and decency. But long after our rupture with Rome, and for many years after the firm establishment of our reformed Church,—ay, even down to the triumph of Puritanism in the seventeenth century,—the hilarious socialities of the

mediæval church-goers were preserved from extinction in various parts of the kingdom. The Laudian ecclesiastics of Charles the First's days were vehement upholders of Church-ales, Bid-ales, and Clerk-ales, as well as of the Sunday revels, for the maintenance of which weekly carnivals the Martyr King republished his father's 'Book of Sports;' and though the eating and drinking attendant on these slowly languishing festivals were ordinarily performed during Charles's reign in church-houses in the vicinity of the churches, ale and cakes were still sold in many rural churches at the grander of the parochial *fêtes*. By their laws against the profanation of the Sabbath, the Parliamentarian and Commonwealth Puritans suppressed almost universally the Lord's-day frolics, and banished carnal riot from the sacred houses,—a social reform which the Cavalier gentry were powerless to undo by raising again the maypoles at the Restoration, and encouraging the losels and jolly dogs of Charles the Second's England to revive the scandals of the previous reign. But even to this day England preserves relics of the ancient social use of her sacred buildings, in the churches which are still used for the transaction of the formal business of Law Courts.

One of the most notable instances of the social use of our places of worship, in times subsequent to the Reformation, occurred at Cam-

bridge in 1564, when upon the occasion, already mentioned in this work, of Queen Elizabeth's visit to that university, the Cantabs converted King's College Chapel into a theatre, and on Sunday evening entertained her majesty with a presentation of Plautus's 'Aulularia.' On the morning of the holy day Elizabeth had joined in common prayer under the roof of the same chapel, and heard Dr. Perne, wearing the Catholic cope, preach a Latin sermon, which gratified the royal hearer so much that, during the delivery of the address, she manifested her approbation by sending Lord Hunsden to the doctor, with her permission for him to put his cap upon his head,—a privilége of which the preacher promptly availed himself. 'And after the sermon was over,' Thomas Baker records, 'ere he could get out of the pulpit, she signified to him by the Lord Chamberlain, that it was the first that she had ever heard in Latin, and she thought she never should hear a better.' At the evening service, performed in the chapel, Elizabeth was again present; and having thus, like a pious lady and true churchwoman, heard a sermon and joined twice in the sacred services of the day, she returned, after a brief interval of rest, for the second time to the consecrated building, for the theatrical performance.

The stage—doubtless fixed in the ante-chapel, though Baker merely speaks of it as 'erected in

the chapel'—was brilliantly illuminated with torches; the actors were members of the university; and the Queen was so cordially pleased with the protracted performance that, though it did not conclude before midnight, she remained till the curtain fell, when she retired amidst the enthusiastic acclamations of her courtiers and the assembled scholars. 'And yet this,' remarks the royalist biographer of the Johnian Masters, having a fling at Prynne and other denouncers of the immoralities of the Caroline stage, 'which was innocent in Queen Elizabeth, when it came to be acted over again in a succeeding reign, in a more inoffensive manner, was looked upon as so profane and scandalous as to alarm the nation.'

In justice to Thomas Baker it should be observed, that, instead of palliating Elizabeth's mode of diverting herself on the evening of the Lord's day, he expresses regret for what he regards as her profanation of sacred time. On the other hand, in justice to Elizabeth, the reader should remember that our mediæval ancestors measured the Lord's day as beginning at 3 o'clock P.M. on Saturday and closing at 3 P.M. on the morrow, and that for a considerable time after the Reformation our non-Puritan ancestors computed the hours of the weekly holiday in the same manner. By attending a theatrical performance on what Puritanism taught

Englishmen of the seventeenth century to regard as the evening of the Lord's day, instead of the evening of the Pagan Sunday, Elizabeth was guilty of no offence against the social practice or religious rules of the period. Of course, alike in their selection of a time and their choice of a place for the performance of the comedy, the rulers of Cambridge did not omit to take thought for decorum and the interests of religion. That it should have appeared to the Master and Fellows of King's a seemly course to turn their chapel into a play-house, and that their action occasioned no disapprobation to the queen or the university, are facts which enable us to realize how greatly the respect shown to churches at the present time differs from the respect shown to them in the Catholic days of our history, and even so late as the opening years of Elizabeth's reign.

CHAPTER XVII.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

UNTIL the Divinity School had been built,—a work completed in 1480,—St. Mary's Church was the only important and spacious building that the university, considered apart from its colleges and halls, possessed for pompous ceremonials and the transaction of business that brought together a multitude of scholars. The reader, therefore, bearing in mind the statements made in the last chapter concerning the social use of the mediæval churches, will experience no surprise on being told that the interior of old St. Mary's Church, besides being the place where the scholars of the various inns assembled periodically for common worship and the hearing of sermons, was rendered serviceable for such secular purposes as are now-a-days accomplished in the Divinity School, the New Schools, Archbishop Laud's Convocation House, the Sheldonian Theatre, and the other unconsecrated buildings of the scholastic corporation.

The court-house, in which the Chancellor or his judicial officers heard the causes of suitors; the central hall, where the members of the academic community congregated daily to confer on matters of business or pleasure, gossiping noisily and sometimes jesting freely as they moved to and fro in all the excitement of busy idleness; the parliament-house, where the scholastic legislators framed new laws for the government of students and the promotion of learning; the chief school, wherein scholars were continually performing exercises for degrees in the various arts and faculties; the public treasury, where debtors paid their dues into the university chest, and creditors received payment from the stewards of academic monies; the theatre, whither the pomps of the university drew crowds of spectators; and the holy place, where the rites of religion were regularly performed by the spirituality of the schools,—St. Mary's Church was at the same time the 'Change and the Temple of the mediæval Oxonians, a place where people met together to gossip and wrangle, to loiter and to pray; and whilst thus frequented for profane no less than for sacred purposes, it was seldom silent, and rarely without a numerous throng of visitors, during hours of daylight.

The Oxonian of the present day would experience no ordinary astonishment and perplexity,

were he submitted to influences which, without depriving him of his ability to think of himself as a scholar of the nineteenth century, should cause him to imagine himself the actual beholder of such scenes as were continually witnessed beneath the roof of St. Mary's Church by Oxonians under the Plantagenet sovereigns. Indeed I can imagine no morbid condition more calculated to destroy the equanimity and exhaust the powers of that extremely august personage, the present Vice-chancellor of Oxford (whoever he may be), than a dyspeptic disorder which, at least once in every four-and-twenty hours, should plunge him in the horrors of a night-mare, that, causing him to mistake the past for the present, should constrain him to regard the profane and tumultuous, and sometimes highly scandalous, doings of old St. Mary's Church, as incidents occurring under his jurisdiction, and calling aloud for his punitive interference.

That august and venerable personage might not be roused to violent indignation or goaded to a paroxysm of terror by the distressing illusion; but most unquestionably he would be strangely troubled and perplexed if he were, without losing clear knowledge of his personal story, compelled to believe himself the eye-witness of such a scene as Mr. Anstey, in his capital preface to the 'Munimenta Academica,' assures us that any intruder within the

old Congregation House might have beheld towards the close of any day of the fifteenth century, set apart for the commemoration of Seldon's benefactions and the distribution of loans of money from the benefactor's chest to poor scholars. To see the more indigent of the needy students,—gaunt, ragged boys, holding chancellor's certificates permitting them to beg alms in the public ways; to behold their lean faces and sordid attire, and at the same time know them to be undergraduates of his most aristocratic university; to observe these scholastic tatterdemalions bring out from their greasy havre-sacks the manuscripts, or articles of clothing, or domestic chattels, on which they are hopeful to raise a few groats; to watch whilst grave and reverend tutors, instead of repulsing the unwashed varlets as creatures scandalously unworthy of a polite seminary, examine with tradesman-like scrutiny the things offered for pawn, and, on finding them sufficient security for the required loans, count out the money and fill in the duplicates which the borrowers receive in lieu of their deposited pledges; to realize the ludicrous and humiliating fact that the benefactor's chest is nothing else than a small Mont de Piété, that the students are sorry cadgers raising the wind to pay a term's battels or a mortgage of their school-books and under-clothing, and that the chief members of his sublime and superfine univer-

sity are mere pawnbrokers,—would be to undergo a series of emotions that would leave the august victim of illusion in no fit condition to discharge the functions of his high and arduous office. That sedate and respectable functionary, the superior bedel of medicine and arts, would rather break his wand of office (if he has one) and relinquish the emoluments of his rather undefinable, but doubtless most salutary post, than endure the agony of thus misconceiving himself to be in connexion with an establishment doing business in the temporary-accommodation line, under the sign of The Three Balls. A proctor's bull-dog might be expected to foam at the mouth, run mad, and bite his master's calves, under the sting of so odious an imputation.

Besides the benefactors' chests, of which the most important members of the university, elected either by the votes of academicians or appointed by the donors' deeds, were the trustees, the Congregation House contained the treasure of the learned corporation; of which treasure a considerable proportion was kept in the university chest, that was provided first with four, and subsequently with five keys. Respecting which strong box and its valuable contents, the statute *De Cistâ Quinque Clavium* (1426) ordained that one of the keys should be held by the Chancellor, and the other four keys by four trustees, two Southerners and two North-

erners, two of them regents and the other two non-regents, elected annually by the university parliament. But in spite of the pains which the university took for the safe custody of its precious chattels, occasions arose when the vigilance and caution of the academic authorities were overcome by the cunning of fraudulent trustees and the audacity of burglarious scholars.

The commotion caused by the thief who in George the Third's time stole the great seal from Lord Thurlow's house in Great Ormond Street, was not more lively than the agitation which seized the academic community when, on February 20, 1543, John Stanshaw of Berkshire, gentleman, and Robert Raunce, of Great Wycomb in Buckinghamshire, a scholar of the university, 'broke open a certain chappel belonging to the chancellor and scholars, adjoyning to St. Mary's Church,' *i.e.* the old Congregation House, and conquering the obstacles of bars and bolts, plundered the Oxford treasury of divers precious things: to wit—'Quinque cyphos argenteos vocatos Flat Sylver Pieces, duo pocula argentea, tres calices de argento aurat. Unum salinum argenti. Quadraginta duo choclearia argenti. Unum par precarum de Corall, cum gaudiis argenti; quadraginta uncias argenti, et auri in pendent. Clavis ligationibus cyphorum, et Buckles quarundam veterum zonarum vocat. Harness Gurdylls, unam catenam auri, vi-

ginti et duos annulos auri, et unum Cochlearium auri ad valentiam centum librarum.' But though Messrs. Stanshaw and Raunce made a clean sweep of the swag, and got away with the university salt-cellar and buckles, the big gold vessel, the cups of silver and silver-gilt, and other articles of booty, they did not escape punishment. The university raised the hue and cry; and having run the culprits down, the proctors and their bull-dogs brought them back to St. Mary's Church, where they were tried, and on being found guilty were condemned to strangulation by the hempen cravat.

When parties burned with mutual animosities, and academic politics gave School Street more than an average number of daily fights, Old St. Mary's Church often witnessed rows equally exciting and humorous. Many were the occasions, as we have seen, when its bells rung the scholars to arms, and its tower sounded what ornate writers are pleased to designate the tocsin of war. But I am not aware that the sacred building ever witnessed a droller shindy than that which occurred in 1311, when the lay and secular regents and non-regents fairly kicked out and otherwise expulsed from the church the friars who presumed to give them notice of an appeal from a decision of the academic convocation to the Pope of Rome.

Laurence de Warwyke, the procurator of the

litigious mendicants, had made more than one futile attempt to execute notice of appeal to the papal authority on the chiefs of the university, before he brought the contention to tumultuous extremities within St. Mary's walls. His endeavour to serve notice on the Chancellor, whilst the chief of the university was presiding in the schools, had nearly cost him a broken pate, through the violence with which the Chancellor's agents repelled the intruder from the chief entrance of the university lecture-rooms. On a subsequent day, when the importunate attorney had succeeded in thrusting a copy of his notice of appeal into the bosom-folds of the Chancellor's gown, the *rector universitatis*, instead of accepting the writ with the composure of a well-bred man of the world, and assuring the process-server that the matter should receive all the attention that it deserved, 'took the said copy out of his bosom, and looking lightly over it, cast it contemptibly in the dirt, with displeasing words then spoken against the brethren.' That is to say, in the public street the Chancellor had flung the writ into the kennel, sneered at the attorney, and told him that his employers were a pack of sorry scoundrels.

Greatly incensed by this contumacious treatment, the procurator and his clients after the lapse of a few days endeavoured to take the university by surprise, and serve it with notice of the appeal

under circumstances of which it would be impossible for its chiefs to feign ignorance. The regents and non-regents were assembled in the Congregation House in debate upon matters of academic politics, when Laurence de Warwyke, attended by a public notary and several mendicant brothers, appeared in the midst of the parliament, and had begun to bawl out the notice of appeal, when the regent-masters, seeing the necessity for prompt and vigorous action, rushed upon the procurator and his abettors, and having turned them neck-and-crop out the sacred building shut the church door against them.

Bent on accomplishing their work, in spite of their extrusion from the church, the friars knocked at the church and asked the occupants of the interior to receive a copy of the notice as formal service of the writ. To which proposal, made by Laurence de Warwyke, the regents and non-regents responded derisively that it was directly repugnant to their notions of the fitness of things. Whereupon the said procurator—a man equal to trying emergencies—jumped upon a tomb, situated in the south side of the churchyard and directly under the open window of the chapel then used as a Congregation House,—from which eminence he thrust his purple face into the parliament chamber, and read the notice of appeal in so stentorian a

voice that, in spite of the clamour within and the hubbub without, his words were audible to several persons of the crowd on either side the consecrated wall. 'Reverend masters,' roared the procurator in the Latin tongue, after he had read the formal notice, 'I would have served this process upon you within the church, if you had allowed me to do so; but since you violently turned me out of doors, I have taken these rather irregular means of reading the writ to you in presence of a notary public and my witnesses, of which facts I call on all persons present to hold themselves ready to give evidence: and yet further, I leave copy of process pinned to the chief entrance of your church.'

Whereupon the irrepressible procurator, who certainly deserved a thumping fee paid once and again for his zealous discharge of duty, fixed the copy of writ to the outside of the church-door, and then worked his way, together with his beggarly clients, to his peculiar inn through a multitude of vociferous and highly excited scholars and aularian servants, who exclaimed at full yell, 'It is a sin for any man to act as attorney to you friars: and it is pious work to kick you out of our doors; yea, and to burn you in your own cells—you who are the most insolent of mortals, and dare, though you are but beggarly riff-raff, to appeal against the decisions of such reverend and indescribably excellent

persons as the regents and non-regents of our effulgent and imperishable university.'

Very brave was the show in old St. Mary's Church whenever a scholar of noble degree performed his exercises in the nave; for when they are compared with the obsequious adulation poured by the Oxonian dons and undergraduates of feudal time on any stripling of an aristocratic house, who condescended to learn how to read and write within Alma Mater's bounds, the fulsome flatteries and servile compliments with which the collegiate dons and plebeian undergraduates, known in Victorian England as tuft-hunters, make life pleasant and poisonous to the 'tufts' of Christ Church and other fashionable colleges, may almost be commended for honest pride and manly self-respect. 'Universitas' was supposed to derive dignity and virtue from every patrician lad who stayed for a few terms in one of her hotels; and in order that students of noble degree on leaving Alma Mater might report favourably of Oxford as an awfully jolly place where f'lers were deuced civil and pleasant, you know, and all that sort of thing, you know,—they were surfeited with slavish homage by chancellor, proctors, principals, tutors, and every order of academicians from doctors to freshmen. When they showed themselves in High Street, graduates of divinity bowed low before, physicians fell cringingly backwards into

gutters so that their highnesses should have room to pass, and artists showed their delight in noble beings by going through the ocular practice known to cynics by a disdainful phrase, which declares the possibility of kissing with the eyes.

These favoured youths were implored to wear brilliant garments, and to soften the severity of their geometrical caps with tassels of auriferous lace,—foppish excesses which would have brought undergraduates of ordinary clay to the birching-block. They were provided with softer beds, and sustained with choicer meats than those prepared for common scholars; and it was discovered that a noble student could grow wise without reading, learned without study,—or, anyhow, with less study than was necessary for the intellectual well-being of a plebeian sophist. The exercises which they were required to perform for their degrees were few and trivial: and whereas ignoble scholars performed their scholastic disputations in the ordinary lecture-rooms and other meaner chambers of the university, patrician undergraduates were invited to respond and argue in the nave of St. Mary's Church. 'If,' said the authorities of the university, 'we are ever to make Oxford a genteel seminary, and get the same aristocratic class of scholars as the London law-colleges, we must render the place pleasant to young gentlemen of high degree, and by our discipline draw intelligible and

manifest lines between the sons of quality and the sons of just such beggarly fellows as our own fathers.' And they carried out this policy with such boldness and consistency, that in the earlier decades of the sixteenth century youngsters, moving in the best circles of society, were often heard to say that, though of course the Inns of Court were the proper seminaries for gentlemen, still Oxford was an uncommonly pleasant place for a f'ler to stay a few months at, and that the scholars of the university knew how to treat a f'ler, and weren't too proud to show their gratitude to a gentleman for coming amongst them.

Of the small number of aristocratic personages who graduated at Oxford in time prior to Edward the Fourth's accession, one of the most conspicuous for familiar nobility and subsequent achievement was the brother of the great Earl of Warwick, George Neville of Balliol College, who performed his exercises in the nave of old St. Mary's Church, and celebrated his inception with a splendid prodigality long remembered in Oxonian annals. On taking his M.A. degree, this patrician scholar gave two banquets of a magnitude and luxury such as Oxford had never before witnessed. For many days the best cooks of the kingdom were busy in the preparation of fowls and wild birds, venison and conies, brawns and subtleties, jellies and fruits.

Vintners supplied the choicest wines of which the guests drank deeply as though they were no dearer than malt liquors. At the first of the two banquets six hundred feasters were entertained with three courses; and on the following day the lordly graduate presided over a smaller and more select party, to which three hundred of his relations, his intimate friends, and the chief scholars of the university were invited. Having concluded his academic career in this sumptuous fashion, George Neville made a quick march to high ecclesiastic preferment; becoming Bishop of Exeter when he was a Master of Arts of only three years' standing, and subsequently rising to be primate of the northern province, his entrance upon which latter dignity he celebrated with a feast which surpassed all previous banquets of the kind, as much as the entertainments at his M.A. commencement had exceeded all previous academic festivities in splendour and profuseness.

Rather more than a century after George Neville took his M.A. degree, new St. Mary's Church was the scene of the most famous trial that ever occurred beneath its roof. When churches were used as criminal courts, the business of judicial investigations was usually performed in the nave, or one of the sacella adjoining the original structure of the sacred edifice. But when Cranmer was arraigned before Bishop Brooks, Dr. Martin, and Dr. Story, on

charges of blasphemy, incontinence, and heresy, the prisoner was brought into the choir of the university-church, which had been fitted up with extraordinary care for scenic effect as a hall of judgment. The bench was a scaffold, standing ten feet above the floor of the chancel and draped with a rich cloth of state; and it was so constructed over the high altar that when Bishop Brooks, the Pope's legate, took his seat, his head was immediately beneath the holy sacrament.

In those dark days the majority of Oxonians were hostile to the principles of the Reformation, notwithstanding the assent which the university had outwardly accorded to the doings of the Reformers in the preceding reign. But though the densely-crowded church was filled chiefly with honest and bitter fanatics, who abhorred Protestantism as the most atrocious of imaginable offences against the Almighty, it contained not a few persons whose judgments approved the religious policy, and whose hearts commiserated the misfortunes of the fallen primate. Time-serving favourers of the new creed, students less brave to denounce than acute to discern the errors of the Catholic faith, and some few orthodox Catholics whose patriotism inspired them with love of the great English heretic who had for many years successfully resisted the pretensions of a foreign potentate to a right to govern England,

found it difficult to refrain from expressions of sympathy, as the aged and infirm prisoner, surrounded by a strong body of armed guards, walked slowly to the place appointed for him at the bar. It was observed that he wore the plain black gown of a doctor of divinity, and that he supported himself with a white staff; and the Spanish friars could not forbear to hiss at him spitefully when, after gazing for a minute steadily at the magnificently arrayed Brooks, he refrained from removing his cap in obeisance to a man who represented within England's realm the power of a foreign ruler whose authority he had sworn never to recognize. The Bishop of Gloucester was furious at the reproof implied by the heretic's demeanour; and the prelate's ire was not mitigated by the alacrity and courtly grace with which the old man, on seeing the royal proctors, lifted his cap from his hoary head and bowed to the lawful representatives of his sovereign's lawful authority, bowing to each of the two royal commissioners, so that his right knee at each obeisance touched the ground.

Other scenes of a like kind occurred at Oxford—in St. Mary's Church, before Bishop Brooks and the two royal commissioners; in the choir of Christ's Church, before Bishops Thirlby and Bonner; and again in the university church, on that foul rainy day, when the degraded primate was rated with

pious fury by Dr. Cole, before being led out to the spot outside the Bocardo, whence the martyr's soul ascended from the agonies of the fiery death to a heavenly home.

In the opening of Queen Elizabeth's reign,—when there was much difficulty in finding divines who could be trusted to preach in behalf of the Protestant doctrines and Anglican polity, though the body of the clergy consented to perform the routine services of the church in accordance with the new injunctions, Oxford experienced such a dearth of licensed pulpit-orators that, in the absence of ordained preachers,—the scholars of the university sometimes consented to listen to sermons delivered from the pulpit of St. Mary's Church by lay-preachers. Richard Taverner, Esq., of Woodeaton, near Oxford, on several occasions thus officiated as select preacher to the congregation of St. Mary's, wearing the damask gown, which was the robe that he habitually wore, when occupying a public pulpit. Representing at the same time the queen's spiritual and secular authority, this devout layman was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, when he preached in St. Mary's Church the sermon which, more to the amusement than the edification of his critical and slightly derisive auditors, he opened with these words: 'Arriving at the Mount of St. Mary's in the stony stage where I now stand, I have brought you

some fyne bisketts baked in the oven of charitie, carefully conserved for the chickens of the church, the sparrows of the spirit, and the sweet swallows of salvation.'

Two years after Elizabeth's entertainment in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, with the dramatic performance mentioned in the last chapter, the scholars of her loyal and resplendent university of Oxford provided for her amusement in the nave of St. Mary's Church a display of scholastic pomp and cleverness, corresponding to the commemorative exercises which are now-a-days performed in the Sheldonian Theatre just before the students disperse for the long vacation. A grand stage, extending from the nether end of the nave to the door of the choir, and suitably adorned with bright draperies and floral devices, was provided for the speakers and auditors of the disputations in natural and moral philosophy, which constituted the pastime that occupied the sovereign's attention for four hours. The performance commenced at two P.M., at which hour the queen and her court had completed a long and sumptuous dinner, and it concluded at six o'clock P.M., when her majesty's maids of honour were beginning to feel an appetite for supper. For the queen's use, a superb throne, covered by a canopy of state, had been erected against the entrance to the chancel; and a consider-

able space near the throne—a space divided from the rest of the nave by a traverse, running from one side of the theatre to the other—was furnished for the gentlewomen of the court, and other noble persons who had a right to places within the royal circle. Leicester was in attendance upon his sovereign, who is recorded to have manifested her cordial goodwill to the earl by saying, with a smile, 'You my lord must still be one,' when Edmund Campian, of St. John's College, respondent in the natural-philosophy disputation, bowing to the queen and her favourite, exclaimed in Latin, 'May God preserve your majesty; you who do and you who counsel these things.'

I am disposed to think that such a four hours' entertainment, as Elizabeth and her ladies received on this occasion in St. Mary's Church, would be thought now-a-days a tedious and insufferable infliction of scholastic pedantry, if it were reproduced in the Sheldonian Theatre at any grand commemoration or chancellor's festival. Nor should I experience any vivid surprise on coming upon the record of some Elizabethan diarist, which should assure me that, though Elizabeth did her best to seem pleased by the attempts to please her, she yawned more than once and betrayed impatience as well as weariness, under the cumbrous Latin compliments with which the actors in a dismal farce

seasoned their bootless and not altogether intelligible talk. If,—as Antony Wood assures us,—she was so delighted when Mr. James Leech, of Merton, exclaimed, 'I will prove this with my life, and, if need be, with my death' ('Vita, et si opus est morte comprobabo') that she cried aloud to her retinue, 'Excellent,—oh, excellent,' it is beyond question that she was easily pleased, and in a humour to make the most of small enjoyments. But, however complaisantly disposed to her entertainers, the excellentissima princess must have found the four hours of Latin disputation hang heavily on hand, must by a lifting of her eye-brows or a shrug of her shoulders have given Leicester more than one intimation that the whole affair was a little too long. Moreover, without casting any ungenerous aspersions on the lady's sincerity, we are at liberty to doubt whether she would have been so ecstatically excited by Mr. James Leech's 'Vita, et si opus est morte comprobabo,' if she had not felt herself under strong obligations to demean herself as though she understood all that the Latin talkers said to one another.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LADIES IN RESIDENCE.

In no respects does New Oxford differ more notably from the Oxford of olden time than in the provisions that are now-a-days made for the residence of gentlewomen within collegiate bounds, and in the courteous alacrity and delight with which Oxonians of the present day receive their 'lionesses' in the weeks immediately preceding each long vacation.

At a very early date of her history, the University exhibited a churlish disdain for womankind, and a monkish averseness to open her gates to the gentler sex. She could preserve with superstitious reverence the dry and blackened relics of Saint Frideswide, and render scholastic homage to the Muses, but for matrons and girls, whose graceful forms and merry laughter were calculated to stir the pulses of young students and draw them from their duties in School Street, she wore no looks of welcome. To women who were old and rich, the severe mother of learned sons could be demurely civil and prudently

obsequious, in consideration of their nearness to death and of the uses to which aged and affluent ladies might be induced to apply their wealth by deeds and last testaments. There is good reason to believe that the Minorite, Richard Slickbury, was not deficient in flattering respectfulness to the Lady Dervorguilla Balliol, when, in his capacity of Father Confessor to that rather wrinkled and exceedingly opulent widow, he urged her to carry out with generous completeness her late husband's designs for the promotion of learning. We may rest assured that the subtle and devout Slickbury never even hinted to the beneficent Dervorguilla that learning was an affair beyond the comprehension of the feminine mind, or that women were altogether out of place when they ventured to intrude themselves into an abode of scholars. Nor is it probable that the authorities of Oxford and Cambridge were loth to accept the benefactions of Henry the Seventh's mother, on account of the painful and humiliating fact that, in allowing the Lady Margaret to found the professorships which bear her name, they were receiving favours from a person who, though noble in rank, was imperfectly despicable in sex.

But though the chiefs of mediæval Oxford condescended to hold a frigid and politic intercourse with those of womankind, whom it was worth their while to conciliate, no monks in the austerest and

most virtuous days of monasticism surpassed them in contemptuous aversion for the inferior and more diabolical section of the human family. Alike by principals and tutors it was maintained, in accordance with ecclesiastical sentiment, that women were by nature vain and wanton, foolish and poisonous—useful no doubt for certain objects, and deplorably necessary to the race which they embarrassed and disgraced; but still things to be avoided by philosophic men, and not to be endured in the dwellings of scholarly persons. It was an aularian don who first suggested that every inquiry for the secret cause of a social scandal or national miscarriage should begin with inquiring 'Who is she?' The statutes and annals of Oxford overflow with evidence of the pains which Alma Mater took to preserve her boys from the perilous fascinations of the demireps and mulierculæ, of whom Professor Huber speaks so pleasantly as members of the university—to guard them also against the allurements of young persons who were chiefly distinguishable from their light and disreputable sisters by the cunning and dissimulation that enabled them to maintain an appearance of goodness, and a character for having virtuous inclinations, which it was impossible for them to possess in reality.

The seminary-perverts of the seventeenth century, and their near kindred—the highest of the Laudian

high churchmen—were wont to inveigh against woman's appearance in the scholastic homes of Oxford and Cambridge as one of the most hideous and revolting consequences of the Reformation, which they were pleased to accuse of having given birth to divers social grievances and enormities. But it would be a mistake to imagine that our rupture with Rome was immediately followed by a public and complete surrender of the Universities to feminine cupidity and ambition. The change of religion rendered it possible for shameless damsels, bent on marriage with collegiate dons, to force their way into the scholastic houses; but, instead of throwing the chief portals of Oxford widely open to the smiling enemy, the revolution only gave them the benefit of a posterngate, through which the most adventurous of the wily brood entered the monastic ground covertly and warily, and with the foreknowledge that, instead of being welcomed unanimously by academic opinion, they would be regarded with vehement dislike or unfriendly coldness by the majority of the scholars.

Cranmer, before taking holy orders, occasioned no lively scandal to his fellow-collegians by surrendering his Cambridge fellowship to marry his first wife; but, so long as Henry the Eighth lived, it would have gone hotly with any ordained clerk who, after perpetrating matrimony in the world's face, had presumed to bring his wife openly to his home

within the bounds of either university, or in any part of the country where the ecclesiastical authorities were on the alert to punish clerical offenders against the law, that precluded priests from the dubious advantages of wedlock.

But Oxford saw the commencement of a new and very different state of things under Edward the Sixth, the directors of whose government not only permitted the clergy to marry, but countenanced them in bringing their conjugal partners to dwell with them in collegiate residences. On complying with the royal invitation to settle in England and instruct the youth of her principal seminary in theological learning, Peter Martyr brought to Christ Church the wife who had relinquished the orders of religion so that she might become the wife of an heretical reformer. And whilst Peter Martyr, the first married canon of Christ Church, demonstrated by his own life the honour of the married clergy, that college had for its dean, and the university had for its chancellor, Dr. Cox, another married divine, who was well pleased to see his domestic arrangements imitated by the chiefs of the learned community. Sympathizing with the indignation which he commemorated, Antony Wood assures us that, in their anger and disgust at this revolution which, besides encouraging canons and principals to marry, 'suffered women and idle hus-

wifes to enter into each house (if the head allowed it) to serve there,' the Catholics, who held firmly to the old faith whilst conforming outwardly to the Reformation, applied the coarsest and grossest of abusive terms to the colleges and halls that thus became receptacles of womankind.

When the Protestant wind had fallen and was succeeded by the Catholic gale that fanned the flames of the Smithfield fires, the commissioners lost no time in purging the university of the shame and guilt of harbouring married clergy. Catherine Cathie, or Dampmartin, Peter Martyr's wife, had for some four years been beyond the reach of human wrath; but as her body had been interred in the cathedral of Christ Church, in a known grave near the relics of St. Frideswide, it was still possible for the Catholic zealots to exhibit their piety and shock human sentiment by offering insults to the corpse of the woman, whom the poor of Oxford remembered for her charities and benevolent labours. Seizing so favourable occasion for doing the Catholic cause irreparable mischief, the commissioners, after transacting divers other matters in St. Mary's Church, where they sat for business, arraigned the memory of the devout Protestant, virtuous wife, and exemplary lady, on charges of heresy and unchaste life. Witnesses were summoned to give evidence against the woman, whose virtues and innumerable acts of

kindness had planted such love of her in the hearts of the persons, thus commanded to turn her accusers, that they chose to perjure themselves rather than raise their voices against their dead friend. She was a foreigner, and naturally spake a foreign tongue; she never mastered the English tongue so that she could be precisely understood. Under these circumstances the witnesses urged that it was impossible for them to have learnt, and equally impossible for them to say, of what religion she was.

This was the substance of what the commissioners could gather against the deceased gentlewoman from witnesses whose gratitude was stronger than their zeal for the triumph of Catholic opinion. They didn't remember, couldn't remember, wouldn't remember; they didn't know the meaning of what they did remember. On reporting to Cardinal Pole this absence of depositions against the faith of Catherine Martyr, the commissioners doubtless thought that, since no case could be made out against the prisoner *not* at their bar, her corpse would be allowed to remain at rest. But Cardinal Pole was one of those rarely conscientious judges who, whilst preferring to act on evidence, are brave enough to dispense with it on trying emergencies. Since it was impossible to convict Catherine Cathie of heresy and unclean life, the greater the reason why he should make an example of so egregious an

offender. Writing to Dr. Marshall, Dean of Christ Church, the Pope's representative ordered that, whereas Catherine Cathie, of detestable memory, after living in deadly sin and dying in her guilt, had been interred in Christ Church Cathedral, her bones should forthwith be exhumed and cast from consecrated ground.

To execute this brutal order no more suitable person than the Dean of Christ Church could have been found in the numerous army of clerical turncoats who, during the successive changes of the Reformation period, were Catholic or Protestant in accordance with humour of time. In early life Dr. Marshall had been an orthodox Catholic. When Henry the Eighth, quarrelling with the Pope whilst clinging to the chief theological dogmas of Rome, assumed the government of the Church, the pliant priest showed no reluctance in taking the oath of supremacy. During Edward the Sixth's reign he had been zealous for the Reformation, without taking any step that would make him an object of Catholic vengeance on the revival of the Papal authority. Mary's reign saw him a virulent persecutor of Protestants; and when Mary was succeeded by her sister, though the pliant priest was ejected from his deanery, he would fain have trimmed his sails so as to hold preferment in the new settlement of the Church. Thousands of English clergy-

men in like manner veered to and fro, like weathercocks obeying every variation of the wind; but Dr. Marshall belonged to the comparatively small body of spiritual time-servers who earned for themselves the title of Vicars of Bray. Whichever party happened to be in the ascendant, they brayed for it harshly and noisily; and whether they brayed for Protestantism or the old faith, they overflowed with malignity to the men who had either the courage to die for their principles, or the decency to forbear from acrimonious vituperation of their opponents for the time being.

On receiving Cardinal Pole's directions, the Dean called to his aid a sufficient number of workmen, and caused them to violate Catherine Martyr's grave with spade and pickaxe. The deed was done in the darkness of a November evening, and, when the dean's servants had accomplished the first part of their repulsive task by torchlight, he caused them to carry the heretic's corpse to his stable-yard, and bury it under his dunghill. Having thus executed the commands of authority, the pious body-snatcher retired to rest, well pleased with his zeal for the restored faith, and hopeful that he should win the cardinal's favour by his piquant interpretation of the injunction placed upon him to remove the bones from consecrated ground.

Under the dunghill, in the hole where the dean

put it, the body remained until Elizabeth had ascended the throne, and her Protestant bishops bestirred themselves to relieve their party of such marks of Catholic enmity as it was possible for them to remove. On receiving a mandate from the prelates to restore Catherine Martyr's body from the unhallowed spot beneath a bin for manure to its previous resting-place, the rulers of Christ Church were constrained to bring the bones of the reformer's wife once again beneath the light of heaven; and in order that they should not be again profaned by Catholic fanatics, it was directed that, previous to their re-interment, the insulted relics should be commingled with the remains of St. Frideswide which had escaped the vigilance of the reformers who, in days prior to Mary's accession, endeavoured to clear the churches of the objects of idolatrous reverence. After a troublesome search the relics of the saint were found, put away in two bags of discoloured silk, and concealed in an obscure corner of the cathedral; where some superstitious believer in their sanctity had secreted them for security from the defilement of heretical touch. The ashes of the Catholic saint and the Protestant wife having been mingled together, they were recommitted to the grave in the January of 1561, in the presence of a large number of witnesses who, upon the Sunday following Catherine Martyr's third interment, lis-

tened to the funeral sermon which Mr. Robert Rogerson of Christ Church preached in the cathedral to the glorification of the woman, and to the infamy of those who profaned her first tomb. For the common sepulchre of Catherine and Frideswide, an Oxonian suggested the epitaph,

'HIC JACET RELIGIO CUM SUPERSTITIONE.'

Of the married principals who rose to power in Oxford in Elizabeth's reign, one of the most notable was William Cole, who had fled from England to Zurich to avoid the Marian persecutors, and during his exile in Zurich had been reduced to such straits that he had on more than one occasion staved off famine by eating mice. To the mastership of Corpus Christi, rendered vacant in 1568 by the resignation of Thomas Greenway, Dr. Cole was nominated by Elizabeth who, overlooking the scandal of his marriage with a virtuous woman, in consideration of his sufferings for Protestantism, counselled the fellows of Corpus to elect him as their chief. But the fellows, to whom this advice was given, being for the most part 'inclined to the Roman Catholic persuasion,' *i.e.* Catholics who were disposed to conform to Protestant requirements in order to retain their preferments, they were rash enough to disregard the sovereign's recommendation, and to choose

for their master one Robert Harrison, M.A., who had been recently removed from the college on account of his hostility to the new religious settlement. Of course this election was declared void: and forthwith a contest arose between the fellows and the queen, from which the former came out second-best.

At the sovereign's direction, Dr. Horne, bishop of Winchester, in his capacity of visitor of Corpus, ejected those of the fellows who obstinately persisted in their refusal to elect Dr. Cole; whereupon the college, having received a seasonable lesson, and a coterie of sound Protestants in lieu of the ejected fellows, made no further difficulties to electing the Zurichian exile. Of the fellows thus ousted from their fellowships for contumacy to the crown, there were three, Edmund Rainolds, Miles Windsore, and George Napier—whose subsequent fortunes, characteristic of the men and their time, Antony Wood has aptly commemorated. John Rainolds, a peace-loving, though stubborn adherent to the old faith, retired to Gloucester Hall, the Oxonian refuge in Elizabeth's days for Catholic gownsmen, where he lived quietly on his ample means till he expired in the ninety-third year of his age. Miles Windsore, the antiquary and writer, also an opulent scholar, persisted like Rainolds in cautious attachment to the ancient creed, and arrived at extreme old age.

'He died,' says Wood, 'a moderate Catholic, or such as we call a Church Papist, anno 1624, aged 86, or thereabouts, and was buried in Corpus Christi College chapel, to which college he left money and books.' To the career of this conservative bookworm who, after warming his hands at the Marian fires, and living in studious retirement throughout Elizabeth's long and stormy reign, lingered almost long enough upon the social stage to witness the interment of James the First, the traitorous restlessness and ghastly ending of George Napier afford a striking contrast. After his ejection from Corpus, George Napier went beyond the seas, allied himself with the Jesuits, and having become a priest of the Catholic church returned to England, to administer privately the sacraments of the proscribed religion, and assist in hatching conspiracies for the subversion of Protestantism and the queen's government. Throughout the later decades of Elizabeth's long reign this seminary-priest, in defiance of the stern but most necessary laws against his politico-religious kind, resided chiefly in England, living in the suburbs and neighbourhood of Oxford, or travelling about the country in furtherance of schemes for the restoration of the Papacy; but in his old age and the eighth year of James the First's reign, the doom came upon him which had consigned to ignominious death so many plotters against the

English church and throne. Apprehended at Kirtlington by Squire Chamberlaine, justice of the peace, the adventurer — a man whose grey hairs and amiable manners extorted the commiseration of his adversaries—was committed to Oxford Castle, and after being convicted of treason in due course of law, was hung, drawn, and quartered in the Castle Yard,—a tragedy which it is probable that his old college-friends, Rainolds and Windsore, left their books and tranquil chambers to witness with tearful eyes. The head and the quarters of George Napier's divided body were exhibited to the dismayed Catholics of the university in conspicuous places of the city:—one of the five parts of the dissected corpse being set over each of the four gates of the city, and the great gate of Christ Church, opposite to St. Aldate's Church.

As for Dr. Cole, the married president, who entered Corpus College on the expulsion of these three fellows, it is recorded by a scribe, who never missed an opportunity to asperse the fame of a married principal, that he dealt so dishonestly with the revenues of the college as to incur the resentment of the society and the censure of its visitor. 'Well, well, Mr. President,' the Bishop of Winchester is recorded to have said at one of his quinquennial visitations of the college, after examining the charges against the married head,

whose only fault may have been inaptitude for the management of accounts, 'seeing it is so, you and the college must part without any more ado, and therefore see that you provide for yourself.' 'Provide for myself!' exclaimed the president with lugubrious vehemence, shivering at the vivid reminiscences of the difficulty with which he had provided for himself in the previous reign; 'What, my good lord, must I then eat mice at Zurich again?' The seasonable allusion to his sufferings for religion did the president good service. The bishop relented, and the doctor was allowed to retain his collegiate place until an arrangement was made between him and Dr. John Rainolds, Dean of Lincoln, whereby the dean and the president changed places.

Though Queen Elizabeth permitted her clergy to take wives, and even promoted priests, like Archbishop Parker and Bishop Hall, to the highest places of the hierarchy, she never disguised her participation in the prevailing sentiment that celibate priests were more worthy of honour than clergymen who had condescended to the inferior and scarcely virtuous condition of honest wedlock. At times, indeed, her imperious highness did not hesitate to express her disesteem of clerical wives in language that was neither queenly nor worthy of a gentlewoman. Harrington records that after

receiving the splendid hospitality of Archbishop Parker, Elizabeth gave her host gracious and cordial thanks for his entertainment, and then turning to the primate's wife, observed with royal insolence, 'And you, madam I may not call you, and mistress I am ashamed to call you; so I know not what to call you, but yet I do thank you.' The sovereign, who whilst forbearing to burn clerical wives at the stake, could thus torture them with the fire of disdainful sarcasm, was especially severe towards the wives of clergymen who presumed to reside with their husbands in collegiate establishments. Since priests were men, the virgin queen conceded that it was well to accord them the privilege of matrimony as a means for avoiding the worse evils attendant on sacerdotal celibacy. She was, however, firm in maintaining that decency forbade their presence in scholastic houses, or other colleges which had from time immemorial been the homes of wifeless men.

In the injunction, which stated the conditions under which the right of wedlock was accorded to the priesthood, she observed, 'If any master or dean, or any head of any college, shall propose to marry, the same shall not be allowed, but by such to whom the visitation of the same doth properly belong, who shall in anywise provide that the same tend not to the hindrance of their house.' And that col-

legiate houses might not be disturbed, or in any ways embarrassed, by the consequences of this concession, a subsequent injunction required that every married principal of a college should keep his wife and children away from his collegiate 'domus,' in a dwelling where his conjugal partner and offspring would neither vex the ears nor offend the sight of the scholars confided to his government. In accordance with this direction, bishops, deans, and other clergy attached to cathedrals, refrained from establishing their wives in their official residences. William Whitaker, master of St. John's College, Cambridge, from 1586 till his death in 1595, and Dr. Chaderton, master of Emmanuel College in the same university, married sisters; but Baker certifies that Dr. Whitaker was careful to keep his wife (his second wife, by the way) and his eight children in a quarter of the town, so remote from his college that the noise of his nursery could not distract studious Johnians. That Thomas Leaver failed to recover the mastership of St. John's on Elizabeth's accession is supposed to have been due to the fact that he married soon after his return from exile, and thereby disqualified himself for restoration to the post from which he had fled on Edward the Sixth's death. But one of the most memorable illustrations of the disfavour in which married clergy and their wives were held in Cambridge,

when Elizabeth had for many years been firmly established on the throne, is the record of the manner in which the Fellows of King's College resented Mrs. Goad's audacity in presuming to show herself on a single occasion in the quadrangle of the college of which her husband was provost. They 'complained of his wife,' says the annalist, 'that she came within the quadrant of the college, though she came never twice within the quadrant, but kept within her lodgings.' The date of this shameless affront to the delicate sensibilities of the scholars of King's was 1576; and in their eagerness for vengeance on the offender's husband, they raised the question whether he had any legal status in his own lodgings, since the statutes expressly forbade their provost to marry. Whereupon there arose much wrangling between Dr. Goad and his censors — a squabble that did not soothe the exasperated feelings of poor Mrs. Goad, who fretted and fumed in the provost's lodgings, and incessantly bewailed the hardship of her lot in being forbidden to take the air in the grand court.

Nor were the Cantabrigians more troubled than the Oxonians by disputes about woman's right to a footing within collegiate walls. 'Truly methinketh,' Bishop Cox, of Ely, wrote to Archbishop Parker, whose marital obligations forbade to think

that clerical wives should be excluded from cathedral closes, or that matrimony should be looked down upon as less honourable than celibacy, 'it is very reasonable that places of students should be in all quietness among themselves, and not troubled with any families of women and babes. But when I considered on the other part concerning cathedral churches, I mused upon what ground or information that should be obtained.' On the two questions thus raised the contention was vehement at Oxford, where collegiate principals were no sooner seen with wives on their arms and in their dwellings, than fellows asked why the privilege of matrimony should be denied to them, whilst it was thus conceded to heads of houses. Licentious scholars were heard to declare that what was good sauce for the goose was good also for the gander, and that if marriage was morally beneficial to reverend doctors of grave years and pursuits, it was surely no less calculated to promote the moral health of bachelors of arts, who were still in the spring-tide of passion. And whilst fellows, who would fain have married without forfeiting their fellowships, and riotous scholars, who found amusement in denouncing the new marriage-law as especially grievous to themselves, thus combined to exclaim against the change which permitted heads of houses

to marry, the great majority of the resident graduates were grievously disgusted and alarmed by the innovation that appeared to them alike repugnant to propriety, and fraught with danger to academic discipline.

From the first years of Elizabeth to the last days of James the First, the agitation against the academic ladies experienced no abatement in collegiate circles; and, away from the universities, social opinion very generally disapproved of the admission of women within the abodes specially devoted to students. The Church Papists, as the outwardly conforming Catholics were designated, never ceased to inveigh against the indecency of allowing married men to govern colleges, and against the disorders that were said to have arisen from so odious and ludicrous an innovation; and their views were supported by a considerable proportion of the Protestants, who preferred old ways to new in all things not specially pertaining to religion. Parsons the Jesuit was well aware that many an honest squire and homely dame, who abhorred the Jesuits as Satan's peculiar offspring, would cordially approve his proposal for sweeping from the universities the entire tribe of women, whether principals' wives or students' bedmakers, who had contrived to make themselves an important element of academic life. 'And first of

all,' said the Jesuit intriguer, in his 'Memorials of the Reformation of England,' 'for settling of common discipline, most evident it is, that all habitation, concourse, and negotiation of women, which heretical dissolution hath brought in, is utterly to be removed from all colleges and communities of students.'

CHAPTER XIX.

GOWNSWOMEN OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

ARCHBISHOP LAUD was no favourer of the married clergy, and had he encountered no overwhelming opposition to his schemes for the restoration of ancient discipline in Church and State, it is probable that the consolations of wedlock would have been again denied to sacerdotal persons. But when his Holiness—as the primate was designated in reverence by his more servile flatterers, and in derision by the more violent of his puritanical adversaries—rose to the supreme government of his university, the academic ladies had become so numerous and powerful, that he dared not venture on any measures for their expulsion. All that he could do for their annoyance and humiliation was to set his clergy an example of celibatic virtue, to express regret when Oxonian magnates derogated from their dignity by admitting women to their lodgings, and to chime in with the fashionable clerical cant which represented that, on

becoming the husbands of virtuous women, ecclesiastics condescended to an inferior state of existence.

Such protests, however, were powerless to stop a social change which yearly increased the number of clerical ladies within and without the universities; and the calamitous ascendancy of the Laudian high-churchmen ere long terminated in the civil conflict which brought Henrietta Maria and her gentlewomen to Merton College, and gathered within Oxford a large proportion of the fairest and most fashionable ladies of the Cavalier aristocracy. Whilst Oxford was a royal garrison, the seat of the sovereign's court, the abode of his councillors, and the home of his parliament, it overflowed with ladies of every degree of rank and wealth, from princesses and peeresses to the dames of knights and the wives of military adventurers who had none but martial titles. And, together with these secular gentlewomen, there flocked to Oxford, from all parts of the kingdom, the wives and daughters of many of the wealthier Oxonian clergy, who, on being ejected from their benefices by Parliamentary committees or Puritan troopers, had sufficient private means to sustain their families at the seat of learning, which had become the chief refuge of Royalists compelled to fly from their homes in southern or midland shires. At this period of disorder and alarm the women of England may be said to have fairly taken

possession of the university, where they had hitherto only been endured under protest, as mischievous intruders; and the fervour and thoroughness with which the fair exiles from bishops' palaces and cathedral residences, from rectorial houses and rural vicarages, proclaimed their devotion to the royal cause and their detestation of the Roundheads, during the season of perplexity and tribulation, did much to conciliate their ancient adversaries, and to secure for them a social recognition which they had never before acquired.

True to the sovereign, whilst his presence glorified the university, the academic ladies refused to humiliate themselves before his enemies, when Oxford had been surrendered to the Parliament, and the king was drawing nigh to the last hideous scene of his life's drama. Some of them had availed themselves of the article, in the terms of capitulation, which provided 'That all ladies, gentlewomen, and other women now in Oxford, whose husbands or friends are absent from thence, may have passes and protections for themselves, servants, and goods, to go or remain at the houses of their husbands, or at their friends, as they shall desire; and to go or send to London, or elsewhere, to obtain the allowances out of their husbands' or parents' estates, allotted to them by the ordinance of parliament.' But, after entering Oxford, when some twelve

months had elapsed since the surrender of the city to the Parliamentarian forces, the commissioners, appointed by Parliament to visit and reform the university, encountered signal opposition from academic gentlewomen who remained in the colleges to show their contempt for the rebel government, and to taunt its representatives for being usurpers and plunderers.

Partly out of respect for the magnanimity with which she bearded the Parliamentarian Visitors, and partly because she was the mother of his literary patron, Antony Wood forbore to say a disrespectful word in 'The Annals' against Dean Fell's heroic wife, whose contumacious demeanour to the enemies of her domestic prosperity occasioned some of the drollest and absurdest scenes ever enacted within the walls of Christ Church.

It was on April 12th, 1648, that the Parliamentarian Visitors of the university,—after many delays and much consultation before they took in hand a piece of business which was likely to cover them with ridicule,—presented themselves at the outer door of Christ Church deanery, for the purpose of inducing Mrs. Fell to quit the quarters which she was resolved never to vacate, until violence had been employed for her ejection. The dean's lodgings, argued Mrs. Fell, were her husband's property; in the absence of her husband, she was required by wifely duty to protect them from invasion and

plunder. As his Majesty's loyal subject, as the wife of an English dean, as a British matron with the children and virtues appropriate to so august a personage, she would give the robbers no better treatment than they merited.

In this humour Mrs. Fell provided for the arrival of the Parliamentarian Visitors, who had intimated to the lady that they would do themselves the honour of waiting on her and turning her out of doors on Monday, April 3rd, 1648. It was their purpose, after bidding Mrs. Fell to pack her traps and begone, to turn the chief parlour of the deanery into a court-house, where they could conveniently receive and examine the members of the college. But they soon ascertained that the dean's wife was not to be driven from her home at the point of a civil order. On arriving at the deanery, Sir Nathaniel Brent and his comrades in burglary by daylight found the door closed and barred. They knocked loudly at the portal, but no one answered the summons. Since Mrs. Fell would not unbar her door, it was clear that the only course they could take was to break it open, and force a passage into the lady's castle. Ere many more minutes had passed, Andrew Burrough, provost-marshal of the garrison, at the head of a guard of musketeers, marched into the quadrangle, where a numerous crowd of students and citizens had assembled to see the fun, though

precautions had been taken to prevent the civic populace from entering the walls of the college. In a trice the soldiers went to work with hammers and sledges, and smashed the strongly-ironed door, as though it had been made of pottery. Over the fragments of the shattered portal the victorious Visitors marched into the interior of the dwelling, where they found Mrs. Fell, standing firmly on her pins, and with her children grouped about her, so that the outraged family formed a highly theatrical spectacle. 'Madam,' said Sir Nathaniel Brent, acting as spokesman of the storming party, 'we have broken in upon you less courteously than we could have desired; but we have acted at the command of duty which requires us to tell you to quit this college without delay.' 'My duty,' said the awful matron, in her grandest style, 'requires me to remain where I am.' 'You won't stir, madam?' inquired Sir Nathaniel. 'Not an inch,' replied madam, glancing at her daughters, who were of opinion that mamma did it all capitally.

Sir Nathaniel Brent and his comrades were perplexed. To bandy words with so dignified and austere a gentlewoman, to take her then and there by the shoulders and bundle her out of doors, were courses of action open to palpable objections. I have no wish to do injustice to men who have been dead for two centuries, more or less; but I am dis-

posed to think that, whilst all the Visitors felt that they had forced their way into a decidedly ludicrous position, the more timorous of them were not a little scared by the terrible lady who showed no signs of quaking before a hostile committee, supported by a body of foot-soldiers. Anyhow they decided to retire and deliberate amongst themselves in private, before taking further action against so abnormal and preposterous a gentlewoman. But as they had no wish to find themselves again under a necessity to break her door open, they left the provost-marshal and his musketeers in charge of the deanery.

On consultation the Visitors came to the conclusion that they had better let Mrs. Fell's case stand over until the arrival of Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, the Parliamentarian chancellor of the university, whose noble presence would, it was hoped, quell the contumacious dame. The Earl would enter Oxford on the morrow week; and in the meantime the lady should be allowed to remain in the deanery under the care of the provost-marshal's men, who were told that they might make themselves comfortable at Mrs. Fell's expense. There was no reason why they should refrain from smoking in her best parlour; they were at liberty to ascertain the quality of whatever provisions they might find in her larder; and it would be for the spiritual advantage of the lady and her children, if they en-

tertained themselves and their captives by singing godly songs according to the wont of pious soldiers. Acting upon which directions, the musketeers had a pleasant and lively time in the deanery, and reduced Mrs. Fell to such a condition of mind that it was difficult for her to believe that she had carried out her purpose of remaining in her own house.

On the morning of Wednesday, April 12th, 1648, Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, accompanied by 'the Visitors, certain soldiers, and a great rabble of people, went to Christ Church, where forthwith entering Dr. Fell's lodgings (he being in safe custody in London), the. chancellor desired Mrs. Fell to quit her quarters, telling her that "in so doing she would do God and her country good service."' But the traitorous Earl was of no more account to Mrs. Fell than his meanest servant. She told the chancellor that he was an impertinent person. Whereupon the Earl told her that she was another; and having given her a specimen of the highly pungent and vituperative oratory, for which he was distinguished at moments of excitement, Philip Herbert ordered the soldiers to fetch a chair, fix Mrs. Fell firmly into it, and carry her out into the quadrangle. On hearing this order for the ignominious extrusion of mamma from papa's house, Mrs. Fell's daughters screamed loudly and went off in hysterics; and numerous sympathetic gentlewomen,

who congregated in the deanery to support dear Mrs. Fell, also fell into tears and lamentations,—so that the uproar resembled the lugubrious riot of an Irish yard on the occasion of a funeral. But Philip Herbert was not the man to blench and turn pale, because woman's weaker soul in woe dissolved aloud. At his command, there were brought just so many stretchers as the occasion required; and the ladies and children, thrown on their backs and strapped to boards, like so many inebriated Irishwomen on their way from a festive entertainment to a place of uncongenial seclusion, were carried out of the deanery and deposited in the middle of what is now-a-days called 'Tom Quad.' Mrs. Fell was not subjected to the indignity of the stretcher. In accordance with the chancellor's original order, she was accommodated with a chair; and as the spirited lady was thus moved away on the shoulders of four musketeers, she exclaimed from her uneasy throne, 'Though I am carried away in a chair, I doubt not that I shall come back again on my own legs.'

When the academic ladies had been deposited in the middle of the quadrangle, those famous Cavalier doctors—Morley, Payne, and Hammond—came to their relief, dried their tears, soothed their outraged feelings, and gallantly conducted them through the gates to Quatervois, and thence to an apothecary's shop in the High Street over against All Souls,

where they were revived with mint-julep and ammonia.

The Cavalier ladies, ejected together with their lords by the Parliament, were replaced by gentlewomen of a demurer and austerer kind, who are charged by their maligners with having made themselves indecorously busy at prayer-meetings and religious exercises during the ascendancy of Puritanism in Oxford. Our vituperative friend Antony asks us also to believe that some of these pious wives of Puritanical principals were less remarkable for honesty in pecuniary affairs than for sanctimonious demeanour. For instance, when the President of Magdalen College consented to divide with his fellows the 1400*l.* of old gold, which the founder of the society had devoted for its relief under special emergencies, it is suggested that the faithless steward was induced to betray his trust by the importunities of his conjugal partner, who was persuaded that 'she was bound in prudence to provide for herself.' In like manner, the caustic and bitter annalist records how much ground there was for disbelieving Dr. and Mrs. Harris of Trinity College, when they claimed as their private property the two sealed bags, containing 100*l.* each, which a house-painter discovered behind some old boarding in Trinity. Dr. Harris had not been President of Trinity for much more than half a year when he

thus asserted his property in the bags which, from the quantity and character of the dust upon them, had the appearance of having been where they were found for full forty years. The doctor and his wife, moreover, told inconsistent stories about the treasure. After Mrs. Harris had stated that the money belonged to one of her friends, who, on failing to induce her to take charge of it, secreted the bags where the workman had come upon them, Dr. Harris, on better consideration, averred that the purses of money were his own. He 'said that he himself laid them there, and 'twas money he had designed for his daughters, and, though no man believed, yet this he averred "verbo sacerdotis."' Clearly a bad case against the Harris family, — demonstrating that Mrs. Harris was a teller of falsehoods and conniver at her husband's theft and perjury, and throwing disrepute on the Harrisian daughters, who had crept into Trinity to devour the bread which should have been given to poor scholars.

But I do not think the worse of Mrs. Harris and her daughters, because they were lightly esteemed by the antiquary to whom academic women were a species of abominable intruders on ground where they should never have been permitted to appear. If the Puritan ladies were hateful in his eyes, their successors of the Restoration period appeared to him

no less odious and hurtful. Lady Clayton, wife of Sir Thomas Clayton, the physician and 'stranger,' who thrust himself into the wardenship of Merton, was, I doubt not, an honest and kindly gentlewoman, who discharged her duty to her husband and children in that station of life to which Antony maintained that she ought never to have been called; and yet what bitter and spiteful things did the antiquary say of her and her family, 'Most of them womankind, which before were looked upon, if resident in the college, a scandall and an abomination thereunto!' The insolent dame required that her husband's collegiate residence should be refurnished at the cost of the society. She disdained 'the warden's standing goods, namely, chairs, stools, tables, chimney furniture;' made a mock of the fittings and implements of his kitchen; insisted that his garden should be replanted with choice and costly roots, and should be provided with a summer-house, 'wherein her ladyship and her gossips might take their pleasure, and any eves-dropper of the family might hearken what any of the Fellows should accidentally talk of in the passage to their own garden.' In being constrained to spend 100*l.* on this egregious arbour, for the convenience of a fanciful woman, Merton was subjected to downright spoliation. Then my lady, in the pride and arrogance of her ambitious nature, must have a coach

and horses, saddle-nags, and a foot-boy to follow at her heels when she went to St. Mary's Church. The college, of course, had to feed her horses, keep her coach in repair, clothe her foot-boy, and, to 'pleasure the proud lady,' purchase for her use a private and peculiar key to the ladies' pew in the university church. Her insolence and greed were surpassed by her wastefulness. She instigated her weak-minded warden to burn 'in one yeare three-score pounds worth of the choicest billet that could be had, not merely in all his rooms, but in the kitchen among his servants, without any regard had to cole, which usually (to save charges) was burnt in kitchens, and sometimes in parlours.'

Having prevailed on Mr. Fisher, one of the Fellows, to quit his rooms on the south side of the warden's parlour, in order that Mistress Frances Stuart might have them whilst Charles the Second, of pious memory, and his Queen occupied the warden's quarters, the grasping and rapacious wardeness took good care that they should be permanently annexed to the Warden's Lodge. On succeeding to the right to occupy the rooms in question, the foolish Mr. Sterry was wheedled, and petted, and flattered into relinquishing his claim to the apartments. Whereupon the warden, to gratify his 'proud and silly woman,' having persuaded the fellows to grant him 'these best lodgings in the college,' knocked a

door through the south wall of his parlour, converted the best of the appropriated rooms into a withdrawing-room, and forthwith repaid Mr. Sterry's courteous pliancy with neglect and contumely. Was it wonderful that on finding himself to have been used as a mere 'shoeing-horne' to serve the turn of 'the most false and perfidious warden,' the duped and humiliated Sterry was well-nigh maddened by rage and self-contempt?

Yet further. Having provided herself with a drawing-room by vile craft and subtlety, Lady Clayton worked upon the college-bursar to spend ten pounds of the society's revenues on 'a very large looking-glass,' for the decoration of the apartment and the reflection of 'her ugly face,'—a glass which, though it belonged to the college, she carried off to her country-seat, called *The Vach*, in Chalfont parish, near Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire. In consideration of her warden's great stature, she insisted that the college should spend forty pounds in purchasing for him a bed and fittings that corresponded to his dimensions,—a consideration, forsooth, which would put the society to the cost of buying a short bed, should the next warden be a short man. So that the tall warden might not knock his head against the top of the college-wicket, the chief gate of the college was altered at a cost which neither Sir Thomas nor his lady made

any proposal to defray from their private funds. 'The said bursar, G. Robarts,' says the censorious Antony, 'hath several times told me that either he the warden or his lady do invent, and sit thinking how to put the college to charge, to please themselves, and no end there is to their unlimited desire.'

Antony's days were drawing to a close, when he had the satisfaction of knowing that Sir Thomas Clayton would never again stare at himself in the mirror thievishly withdrawn from the college; but the chronicler's exultation over the disappearance of the inconveniently tall warden was followed by a fresh attack of bilious disgust, occasioned by the appearance in Merton of another married warden, whose wife and daughter claimed to 'be fed with the bread belonging to piety and learning.' This repetition of an offence which he regarded almost as a personal insult to himself assisted the chronicler's painful malady not a little in preparing him for his coffin. 'What they eat and drink,' the poor man groaned, 'would serve for the exhibition of seven or eight poor scholars.' Not content to sustain his progeny and intrusive wife with means taken from pious students, Dr. Lydall smashed a lot of old glass panes that were unspeakably dear to the antiquary's heart. 'The first thing,' says the aggrieved annalist, bewailing the injury done to the college of which he had been a member, 'that Dr.

Lydall caused to be done after he was admitted warden, and before he settled in his lodgings, was to take down the old windows in the warden's dining-room and hall under it, containing rebusses, fantastick devices in nearly all the panes, and set up square glass, yet caused the armes to be set up againe, the majestic light was lost. Had he been a single man, and not had a nice wife with six or seven daughters, this would not have been done; the next was to set up his coach, having had none before; yet had he been a single man, as Dr. Goddard was, he would have kept none.'

When 'lionesses' visiting Oxford for the gay doings of commemoration week spend a morning at Merton, they should look out for Antony Wood's mural tablet in the chapel, and render the tribute of a smile and a few pleasant words to the memory of the academical misogynist who died Nov. 28, 1695, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BIRCH IN THE BODLEIAN.

I AM not aware that the Bodleian ever contained one of those birchen sceptres feelingly commemorated in the verse of Cowley and Shenstone; but it is certain that Oxonian disciplinarians of olden time kept an imposing store of penal besoms in and near the schools, for the promotion of learning and the correction of youth's evil tendencies. Moreover, alliteration gives piquancy to a title; and the time has come for me to administer to the froward and malapert undergraduate the inflammatory 'tingler' with which I threatened him at an earlier stage of this work.

In these delicate and fastidious days, when the discipline of the rod has come to be regarded as a disgraceful relic of our ancestors' least creditable usages, and when to speak frankly of an Eton flogging is to shock the sensibilities of the refined and call a blush to 'the young person's' cheek, I may perhaps occasion offence to some of my readers by assuring them that not very many generations

have passed since Oxonians, in reward for faults that would at the present date be visited with a sentence of 'gating' or a term's rustication, were required to kneel at the penal block and offer themselves to the stripes of the flagellator; but the risk of giving pain and causing displeasure to the innocent and bashful student must be incurred in the path of duty. The welfare of the Oxford 'man,' whose first razor is still unbought, requires that he should be informed concerning the laws under which he moves and has his academic being,—rules that were framed for his moral and intellectual edification by the wisdom of our ancestors, and through which he is still liable (according to the letter of university law) to be stripped and scourged by the school's clerk for breaking a fellow-collegian's square cap over his knee, or omitting to cap a bachelor of arts, or buying an ounce of birds'-eye from any tobacconist's in the High Street or the Cornmarket.

It was a Coptic proverb that the stick came down from heaven; and the scholastic disciplinarians of feudal England took the same flattering view of the stick of divers twigs, of which most English gentlemen, who learnt grammar before the triumph of the humanitarians, have pungent and afflicting reminiscences. The Church believed in birch, using it freely on scholars and social delinquents of every degree, and, on the authority of Solomon, warning

parents and guardians of the evil consequences that would ensue if they omitted to employ its salutary smart for the formation of youthful character; and, though it is in the nature of things that familiar usages should pass away without leaving any evidence of their existence commensurate with their universality, there is abundant testimony that the parents and guardians acted so freely and consistently on the pious advice, that the nurseries and school-rooms of the past resounded daily with the wailing of the innocents under process of being made more innocent than before.

On taking charge of Henry the Sixth, the great Earl of Warwick expressly demanded, and was no less explicitly given, authority to snub, fillip, pull by the ear, box, cuff, cane, cob, bastinado, and otherwise larrup his royal pupil, whensoever the said royal pupil should seem to require such judicious incentives to the pursuit of virtue. 'Item,' runs the fourth of the articles of agreement betwixt the noble pedagogue and the other lords who provided for the monarch's infancy, 'that considering how, blessed be God, the king is grown in years, in stature of his person, and also in conceit and knowledge of his high and royal authority and estate, the which naturally cause him, and from day to day as he groweth shall cause him more and more, to grudge with chastising, and to loath it, so that it

may reasonably be doubted lest he will conceive against the said earl, or any other that will take upon to chastise him for his defaults, displeasure or indignation therefore, the which without due assistance is not easy to be borne. It like therefore to my Lord of Gloucester and to all the lords of the king's council to permitte to the said earl and to assure him that they shall firmly and truly assist him in the exercise of the charge and occupation that he hath about the king's person, namely, in chastising him for his defaults, and support the said earl therein; and if the king at any time will conceive for that cause indignation against the said earl, my Lord of Gloucester and lords shall do all their true diligence and power to remove the king therefrom.' To which stipulation and covenant the lords of the council having, under their signatures, assented with the words 'It is agreed as it is desired,' the Earl of Warwick was emboldened to discharge, without fear, the positive functions of a parent to his royal pupil, whom he continued to lick into royal shape without any weak concessions to the youngster's notions of the unfitness of such servile punishment for a sovereign.

In the generation that saw the infant monarch thus rudely disciplined in the ways of virtue, children were universally subjected to treatment which appears abominably cruel to us of the nineteenth

century. Because her grown daughter declined to love as she was commanded, that worthy dame, Agnes Paston, not only flogged her once or twice a-week, but administered parental chastisement in such a form that she repeatedly broke the skin of the stubborn damsel's head. And whilst exercising such stern control over her daughter, Madam Paston, in her care for her sons' welfare, enjoined their tutors to thrash them soundly in accordance with the sacred traditions of the scholastic profession. Thus she urged Master Greenfield, a London pedagogue, to emulate the severity of the Cambridge tutor, who earned her gratitude by flogging Master Clement Paston to the full measure of his delinquencies. 'And if he hath not done well,' wrote the energetic mother who was by no means deficient in womanly kindliness, though she could on fitting occasions knock her daughter about the head with a stout cudgel, 'nor will not amend, pray him that he will truly belash him till he will amend; and so did the last master, and the best that ever he had at Cambridge.'

In justice to the pedagogues of olden time, it must be admitted that left to themselves they showed no disposition to temper their severity by consideration for the rank of the pupils submitted to their government. Even in the days when the heir to the Scotch throne was whipped in the person

of a proxy, whose sufferings under the lash were supposed to stimulate the royal pupil to amend his faults for the sake of the playmate, thus liable to flagellation for the errors of another, tutors in regal dwellings sometimes had the courage to set aside the courtly arrangement, and lay on princely skin the stripes that princely faults provoked. By a story more pungent than polite it is commemorated how George Buchanan, to the horror of a great lady who exclaimed against the tutor's violation of etiquette, administered to the Scottish Mary's son a dose of homely correction, at the risk of losing his office and incurring high penalties for presuming to strike his sacred pupil.

And whilst children of every degree were thus brought up in fear of the rod, the punishment of the whipping-block was neither so cruel nor so ignominious as it appears at the present day, when it has been abolished from most of our seminaries, and when the boys of our old-fashioned and conservative public schools dread the disgrace more than the pain of a flogging. Deprived of its shamefulness by the frequency and the universality with which it was exhibited, the familiar correction was deemed so ordinary and necessary a condition of every youngster's existence, between the years of infancy and opening manhood, that no more discredit accrued from a flogging to a mischievous

undergraduate in Elizabethan England than the infinitesimal disrepute occasioned now-a-days by a dean's reproof, or sentence of gating, to a student who has distinguished himself by neglecting to keep chapels, or repeatedly knocking up the porter of his house after the appointed hour for students to be in college. When Mr. Edwards, the witty writer of 'Palæmon and Arcyte'—the play enacted at Christ Church before Queen Elizabeth — told her majesty, at the door of St. Mary's, that Mr. Edrich had formerly been his tutor, the queen replied to the saucy boy, for whom she had conceived a liking, 'Certainly he did not give thee enough whipping'—a remark which the sovereign, speaking in one of her most gracious moods to a pleasant lad, would certainly not have made had corporal punishment been thought highly disgraceful; a retort, also, that would have been pointless had it not been the fashion of tutors to inculcate manners by personal chastisement.

Whilst Oxonians were thus drilled and governed with the rod, they were liable to corporal punishment from three distinct powers. Floggings were public, domestic, or tutorial. That is to say, whipping might be administered in the face of the whole university by Alma Mater herself, operating by the hand of her official flagellator; or before the members of the delinquent's academic house by the authority,

if not the hand, of its principal; or in private by the tutor of the peccant undergraduate. In addition to floggings, belonging to one or another of these three kinds, may be mentioned flagellations of a fourth kind — the classical drubbings which pupils underwent, before the development of the collegiate system, in the public school-rooms of the university at the hands of teachers who were wont to quicken the wits or correct the vicious ways of learners by the cogent logic of the stick. Of course, when the lecture-rooms of School Street were suppressed by the lecture-rooms of the separate academic houses, the corporal corrections of this fourth kind vanished from the circumstances incidental to university education. So soon as students universally received their instructions from masters specially appointed to teach the inmates of their respective societies, the punishments previously awarded to undergraduates for dulness or inattention at lessons in the common schools were exchanged for similar corrections administered by heads of houses or collegiate tutors.

Of the domestic flogging—*i. e.* the flagellation given by the authorities of a particular college or hall to an offending member thereof, in the presence of his mates or fellow-collegians,—an instance occurred at Corpus Christi in 1554, when Jewell's pupil, Edward Anne, was whipped in the hall of

the society by Mr. Walsh, the dean of the college. In King Edward's time, when Oxonians could with impunity insult the prevailing opinion of the university by deriding the Catholic faith, which a considerable proportion of scholars secretly favoured after publicly abjuring it, Master Edward Anne had written some pungently satirical verses against the Mass—a literary performance that in the following reign secured for the youthful poet an ignominious share of the honours of martyrdom. Called to account by the Marian persecutors, the culprit was taught by a somewhat ludicrous, though acutely painful, discipline that authorship was attended with peculiar risks and inconveniences in times of continuous changes, when it might become a crime to have uttered sentiments that a twelvemonth earlier, at the time of their utterance, were deemed highly commendable. Delivered over to the strong arm and vindictive zeal of Dean Walsh — an honest gentleman, who had no doubt that Protestantism, like any other kind of madness, was a diabolical fury, for which stripes were the best medicine — Edward Anne received a lash in recompense for each of his heretical verses, after which recognition of his literary merits he ceased — either through his expulsion or voluntary retirement — to be a member of the college that had treated him with such indignity. The chastisement,

however, seems to have had the desired effect; for Edward Anne repented of his Protestant errors, and, on giving satisfactory proof of his contrition and orthodoxy, became successively chaplain and fellow of All Souls, when none but apparent Papists were suffered to hold preferment or follow learning in Oxford.

That corporal chastisement was a common punishment at Oxford in the seventeenth century the reader may learn from a perusal of the Caroline Code or Laudian Statutes, promulgated in the year of our Lord 1636,—a body of laws which, having never even to the present day been repealed, though many of them have fallen into desuetude, are calculated to fill the nervous undergraduate with consternation, and strike terror into the hearts of English ladies whose sons (being Oxonian undergraduates) are liable to be whipt in the Convocation House by the clerk of the schools for playing billiards, or buying a mild cheroot in a tobacconist's shop, or wantonly breaking the board of a fellow-collegian's square cap. By Section 4 of the Statute XVIII., entitled 'Of the ministers and servants of the university,' this Spartan code—defining the duties of the clerk of the university (now-a-days ordinarily designated the clerk of the schools), and the ringer or tintinnabulary, 'commonly called Le Bellman'—provides that the former sufficient and

muscular functionary shall undertake 'at the command of the Vice-chancellor or proctors, to give the boys a public flogging, if any there be who deserve blows.' From Chapter 10, of Statute XV., 'Of forming manners,' it appears that the place, in which the clerk lashed unruly students in the presence of a numerous assembly of gownsmen, was the Convocation House.

That I may neither weary myself, nor needlessly afflict sensitive readers, I forbear to specify all the misdemeanours for which Oxonians were flogged in the seventeenth century, and are still liable to slavish lashes, by the strict letter of Oxford law. But concern for the happiness and honour of young gentlemen, who may even yet be called upon to kneel and receive the flagrant twigs upon their skin, requires that I should name a few of their customary practices to which the martyr-primate assigned the penalty of stripes.

The sons of barons of the Upper House, and also of barons in the Scotch and Irish peerages, were allowed to indulge their noble taste for personal decoration without let or hindrance; they might cover themselves with gold lace and gaudy silks, and wear ribbons in their hair or pendent from their ears; but Chancellor Laud decreed that other academicians should dress in clerkly fashion, *i.e.*, should wear clothes of a black or dark colour, and eschew

garments betokening pride or luxury. The undergraduate, who in the insolence of youthful vanity violated this order, was punishable with a fine not exceeding 6*s.* 8*d.* for each offence, or with a public whipping 'when his years admitted of it.' Eighteen was the age at which scholars were supposed to attain a degree of virile dignity which rendered personal chastisement an unsuitable mode of punishing their offences; but, though certain passages in Laud's penal code indicate that undergraduates after completing their eighteenth year were regarded as too old for the discipline of the whipping-block, the vice-chancellor and proctors were not expressly forbidden to flog students of a riper age, who had not earned immunity from the lash by becoming graduates.

By encouraging on his proper head 'The growth of curls or immoderately long hair,' or disobediently 'walking abroad within the university,' without his appointed scholastic habits, the youthful undergraduate ran risk of experiencing the force of the public flagellator's arm. At the same time, to form the manners of academic youth, it was ordained, that undergraduates should both in public and private show due and suitable reverence to their academic superiors of every degree; that they should give the wall, and uncover their heads, to all such superiors whom they encountered in the streets; and

to enforce due observance of this decree, the vice-chancellor and proctors might send to the whipping-block any undergraduate, being of years that permitted his subjection to corporal punishment, who had insolently omitted to cap a bachelor of arts in the High Street.

With more propriety the rod was employed in the Convocation House for the correction of youthful scholars guilty of forming immoral associations with a particular kind of delinquents, who are still treated with prompt severity by the rulers of the university. An undergraduate taken in a house of ill-fame by daylight sometimes escaped the lash; but apprehended in such a dwelling of iniquity by night he necessarily underwent the same sharp discipline, that the law awarded to the lowest sort of shameless women. With respect to which last enactment, one is more inclined to extol the justice and good sense, than to exclaim against the cruelty of the scholastic Lycurgus. The student, however, regards with less cordial approbation the fifth chapter of the fifteenth statute, which punished the undergraduate who bought an ounce of tobacco or a cup of wine in a tavern, as severely as he would have been dealt with had he been convicted of a disgusting offence against morality. 'It is enacted,' runs this section of an inconsistent statute, 'that scholars of all conditions shall keep away from inns, eating-houses,

wine-shops, and all houses whatever within the city, or precinct of the university, wherein wine or any other drink, or the Nicotian herb, or tobacco, is commonly sold; saving for a necessary and urgent cause, which must have the sanction of the vice-chancellor or proctors; also, that if any person does otherwise, and is not eighteen years old, and not a graduate, he shall be flogged in public.' That public floggings must have been frequent in the university, so long as this law of the Caroline Code was enforced with consistency and zeal, no one is likely to question who knows aught of youthful nature.

With almost equal harshness the torture of the whipping-block was assigned to scholars of the age appropriate for stripes, who played 'any kind of game in which there was a money-stake, as for instance, the games of clubs, dice, and cards, and also ball-play in the private yards and greens of townsmen;' who 'hunted wild animals (fallow-deer, hares, and rabbits for instance) with hounds of any kind, ferrets, nets, or toils;' who frequented the entertainments of rope-dancers, actors, or sword-players; or who were so forgetful of their scholastic dignity and the academic proprieties as to play foot-ball within the university or its precinct, or fight with staves amongst themselves or with the townsmen in 'the game called cudgel-play.'

Not only was whipping adjudged to the lads who

joined in these forbidden sports, but the same punishment was allotted to undergraduates of like tender years who were passive beholders of the forbidden pastimes. 'But should they be convicted,' concludes the statute, against sport-loving scholars, 'either of having played themselves, or been wilfully present (as spectators) at such idle amusements, the younger sort, who are not graduates, and under eighteen years, are to be publicly whipped; but the graduates, or those above eighteen years, are to be punished as disturbers of the peace at the vice-chancellor's or proctor's discretion.' A subsequent section of the same statute assigned divers pecuniary mulcts to the offences of threatening bodily harm to a fellow-collegian, challenging him to fight, jostling against him, and spoiling his clothes. For any one of these and other comparatively trivial offences, the ordinary punishment was a fine of 4*s.* Heavier mulcts and humiliating penances were fixed for graver offences against Alma Mater's peace. Thus it was enacted, 'If anyone shall strike another with a knife, dagger, or any other instrument, whereby a slight wound and inconsiderable effusion of blood follows, he is to incur the last preceding punishments' (*i.e.*, fine, suspension from his degree, and imprisonment), 'and must, besides, beg pardon on his bended knees in the House of Convocation.' For the benefit of the youngsters

and to keep the clerk of the schools fully employed, the statute adds, 'Moreover, in all these degrees of punishment, the person offending is liable to make amends to the party aggrieved (according to the damage done) at the discretion of the vice-chancellor; and, moreover, he is to suffer bodily punishment, if his years and degree admit of it, publicly in the House of Congregation.'

CHAPTER XXI.

AULARIAN RIGOUR.

WHILST the clerk of the schools was thus provided with enough work for his strong arm, the angry music of the birch cutting the air in quick descent was frequently heard in the common halls of the various academic houses, together with the lamentations that ordinarily attended the severe chastisement of peccant youth. No records appear to have been kept of the offences for which, or the occasions when, domestic floggings were generously bestowed on erring scholars. I am not, therefore, in a position to lay before the reader any exact statistical information respecting the frequency of such administrations of correction. But no one, acquainted with the statutes and annals of Oxford in times prior to the Commonwealth, is likely to doubt that, in the earlier decades of the seventeenth century, the rod was not less often and freely used for the chastisement of the younger students, within the walls of their respective colleges or halls, than it is now-a-days em-

ployed at Eton for the discipline of the junior scholars.

Archbishop Laud's Statutes of the Halls—promulgated for the benefit of students resident in the academic houses, for whose discipline and prosperity Alma Mater was specially responsible—demonstrate with sufficient preciseness the powers with which collegiate authorities were endowed for the government of youth, and the means by which they trained young gentlemen to walk in the ways of virtue and pleasantness. The master and fellows of a college were not bound to act upon the Laudian or Caroline code in their domestic concerns; but it is not probable that the archbishop and chiefs of the university required the principals and tutors of halls to employ harsher provisions for the control of undergraduates than the penal measures sanctioned by the ordinary practice of the colleges.

The statutes of the halls certainly did not err on the side of leniency; but there is no ground for supposing that they were characterized by exceptional and peculiar severity.

They enacted that no student should transgress the orders of Alma Mater respecting the habitual wearing of academical garments, without rendering himself liable to a fine of two-pence for each offence. Convicted of allowing his hair to grow inordinately, the aularian student was punishable with an amerce-

ment of four-pence; and for omitting to carry his cap in his principal's presence, on meeting the said principal in hall or elsewhere, he was liable to a sconce of two-pence—a sum that in due course became a proverbial fee for a lesson in manners. For speaking in any other language than Latin within the ambit of the hall, to any person who was neither illiterate nor a stranger, nor fifty years of age, he might be fined a penny. Within his hall he was required to 'show due deference to every person according to his degree, by giving way, and going uncovered at the due distance.' A penny sconce might be inflicted upon him, if he used indecent or scurrilous language. By 'idling away his time in lounging, sitting, or walking in laymen's houses, or the streets,' he rendered himself liable for each offence to a fine of two-pence. Neither in town nor in the adjacent country might he walk without a companion; and for every violation of this monastic rule he might be mulcted to the amount of a penny. On leaving the university for a journey into the country he was required to obtain leave of absence from the authorities of his hall, and on returning from the country to his 'domus' he was enjoined to enter on a special register the times of his going and returning.

Of course he was required to be at home, before the nocturnal hour for closing the gate of his hall,

and to pass the whole of each night in his own chamber. He might be fined four-pence, if, without his principal's permission, he entertained a stranger for a night in his rooms; and two-pence, if without sufficient justification for his irregularity, he came to the common dinner or supper, in the refectory of his hall, after grace had been said, or if he took meals in his private chamber without a special permission to do so. He might not bring a guest to the said dinner or supper, unless he had obtained the principal's permission to do so. Nor might he bring his dinner knife into hall unsheathed. He was forbidden to enter the buttery or kitchen of his house. He incurred the heavy fine of twelve-pence, if 'he challenged any associate of the same hall, or a stranger, to drink deeper or faster than usual, or gave occasion to himself or others to get drunk.' If he went beyond bounds in his commons or ordinary expenses, he was liable to correction at the discretion of his principal—a penal provision which might be revived with advantage to many a youngster who is now permitted to ruin himself for life by extravagance, whilst Alma Mater, instead of restraining his excesses with proper firmness, is content to expostulate weakly with him, or to smile complacently at his suicidal doings. He was forbidden to 'practise the games of dice, tables, fencing, or any other disreputable game,' within the precinct

of his hall. He might not 'keep or fondle dogs for hunting or of any other kind, or hawks within the ambit of the hall.' Punishment awaited him 'if he prevented his fellows from studying or sleeping by singing, making a noise, shouting, or discharging guns, or by any other kind of uproar or din.' He was strictly enjoined not to tell tales out of school to the detriment of his hall or its mates. At the peril of his purse or skin, he committed an assault, violent or slight, on a fellow-aularian. He found himself in particularly hot water if 'he presumed to attend unlawful conventicles.' Indeed, for this last offence the aularian of Laud's Oxford was expulsed from his hall and denounced to the vice-chancellor, who, before dismissing him from the university, usually took precautions that he did not start on his countryward journey, until the public flagellator had furnished him with a warm travelling-jacket.

For all these and divers other venial offences the youthful aularian might be fined; but in cases where he was too poor to pay the appointed mulcts—and indeed on all occasions when his principal was of opinion that a sound flogging would do him good—he was punishable with the stick or flagrant besom. The framer and cordial adopters of the Caroline code ordained, with respect to aularians, 'That where any penalty is mentioned in a statute, the principal shall

enforce it on the offenders, unless it shall seem fit to commute pecuniary fines for scholastic exercises, or (if the party's means are slender) for corporal chastisement: that in all instances where pecuniary fines are mentioned, corporal punishment may be inflicted instead of the fine, if lawful in respect of the degree and age of the party: that no party who has committed a public offence of great heinousness shall, in consequence of private chastisement by his tutor, be excused the penalties and fines which it is for the principal to inflict.' Whence it appears that if Milton really underwent the corporal chastisement which biography represents him to have endured at Cambridge, he experienced in that respect no pain or humiliation that put a peculiar stigma upon him in the opinion of his scholastic contemporaries.

The use of the rod disappeared gradually from the universities, even as it is now gradually perishing from the discipline of our public schools; but it was not altogether relinquished at Oxford till a comparatively recent date. So long as lads were allowed to matriculate in mere boyhood, at any age between their twelfth and sixteenth years, the birch appeared the proper instrument for counteracting their evil propensities, and universal ridicule would have been poured on the social censor who should have urged that the ordinary corporal chastisements of the grammar-school were inappropriate

to collegians who were still children. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that even in the days when university undergraduates were sometimes boys who had not completed their twelfth year, Oxford afforded instruction to a considerable number of still younger children, concerning whom the tender-hearted and humane were much more likely to urge that they were too young than that they were too old to be whipped. Antony Wood was still in his tenth year when he was translated, in the year 1641, from his first preparatory Latin school to the 'New College Schoole, situated between the west part of the Chappell and E. part of the Cloyster,' of which academy the antiquarian annalist recorded, in his autobiography, 'One John Maylard, fellow of the said college, was then, or at least lately, the master (afterwards rector of Stanton S. John, near Oxon.); and after him succeeded Joh. Davys, one of the chaplaynes of the said house, whom he well remembers to be a quiet man.' For the correction of such infantile scholars as learnt their primers in the preparatory schools, which were important features of collegiate life long after the Restoration, Alma Mater continued to employ the rod, long after she had ceased to apply it to her matriculated undergraduates.

The Hampton Court Conference was enlivened by an incident which illustrates the matter-of-course

and familiar regard in which the rod was formerly held by the disciplinarians of our universities, and which may perhaps be construed as evidence that the birch was habitually used in the class-rooms of the Scotch universities when it had disappeared from the ordinary furniture of an Oxonian lecture-room. It would bring a blush of shame on this pure page were I to transcribe the exact words in which the British Solomon, acting as moderator at that singular disputation between the Puritans and High Churchmen, informed the Puritan divines that such reasoning, as the arguments whereby they had exhausted his kingly patience, would in the days of their boyhood have brought them to the whipping-block. 'They fled me so from argument to argument,' said James with coarseness that may not taint this book, recounting the particulars of his triumph over the Presbyterian rogues, as he courteously designated them, 'without ever answering me directly (*ut est eorum mioris*), that I was forced to tell them that if any of them, when boys, had disputed thus in the college, the moderator would have fetched them up and applied the rod to their backs.' Whence it appears that James the First's notions of sound collegiate discipline sanctioned the administration of blows by subordinate masters, operating in their class-rooms at the instigation of momentary irritation.

That the collegiate principals of Caroline Oxford were sometimes more prompt than discreet in obeying Solomon's precept for the education of young people, we may infer from an anecdote which John Aubrey tells of his old master, Dr. Hannibal Potter, the royalist president of Trinity College, Oxford, who governed that society from August 8, 1643, until his ejectment by the Parliamentary visitors in 1647-8, and who, upon Charles the Second's restoration, resumed the president's office, which he occupied till his death on the first day of September, 1664. Born on March 12, 1627, John Aubrey became an undergraduate of Trinity College in his sixteenth year, shortly before the election of Hannibal Potter, under whose government the antiquary passed the greater portion of his collegiate days. Recalling the incidents of this period of his life, at a distance of more than a generation of time, and when Dr. Potter had been nearly fifteen years in his grave, Aubrey recorded of that fine specimen of the Caroline doctor of divinity, 'At Oxford (and I believe at Cambridge) the rod was frequently used by the tutors and deans; and Dr. Potter, of Trinity College, I knew right well, whipped his pupil with his sword by his side, when he came to take his leave of him to go to the inns of court.' The misdemeanour for which the doctor thus flogged a sword-wearing member of the university is not

specified; but the youngster certainly did not come to grief for misconduct in thus bearing a sword in the president's presence; for—as the reader does not need to be told at this point of an anecdotical memoir of scholastic usages—students were permitted to wear arms within the university when they were on their way from college into the country. In carrying his sword, when he called at the lodge to take formal leave of his president, the student (who may perhaps have been the narrator of the incident himself—for John Aubrey went from Trinity College to the Middle Temple) was altogether in accordance with usage.

Whilst the birch remained a recognized instrument of collegiate discipline, it was usual to speak of an undergraduate as living under the lash of the master of his college; just as biographers, so long as it was generally thought impossible to impart knowledge to children without the aid of the stick, used to speak of any school-boy as subject to his preceptor's ferula. Even scholars of high place in the university were occasionally described by the same insulting phrase. Thus Antony Wood, speaking of Dean Fell's disdainful behaviour to the Parliamentarian Visitors in 1647, says, 'Which being done, Dr. Fell was again summoned to appear this day in the afternoon, but he came not, nor even would appear before such inconsiderable persons as

they, but rather scorned them. All except Brent were far inferior to him either in standing or degree, and Mills being one of the students of Christ Church, and so consequently under his lash, and went bare to him, he did not think fit, as dean of that house, and especially as Vice-Chancellor, to stand bare to his scholar.'

It is worthy of remark that in the days when the rod was applied to students in the Convocation House, and when collegiate principals and tutors maintained academic order by domestic floggings, 'private coaches' would sometimes beat their pupils for stupidity or carelessness. After becoming Mr. Edward Copley's postmaster at Merton College, Antony Wood received private tuition from his elder brother Edward, who on more than one occasion endeavoured to quicken the future historian's wits by licking him. 'A. Wood's brother,' says the antiquary in his personal narrative, 'was pevish, and would be ever and anon angry, if he could not take or understand logical notions as well as he. He would be sometimes so angry, that he would beat him and turn him out of his chamber, of which complaining to his mother, she was therefore willing that Antony should take another tutor.' Antony was in his seventeenth year when he rebelled against the thrashings bestowed on him by his big brother.

CHAPTER XXII.

ROYAL SMILES :—TUDOR AND GEORGIAN.

So long as Oxford was struggling for existence, she was not embarrassed by the attentions of royal patrons; and when kings and princes found it to their interest to recognize and influence her proceedings she seldom received any favour from their hands without paying an exorbitant price for it. Their benefactions were usually rendered out of their subjects' pockets, or the purses of benevolent but comparatively humble individuals, the merit of whose munificence to the followers of learning was magnanimously appropriated by legal authority. Thus Edward the Second gained credit for founding Oriel College, which had its origin in Adam de Broom's bounty, and owes nothing of its present affluence to the unbought generosity of sovereigns. And in like manner, though Christ Church is usually designated a Royal Foundation, they are not discountenanced by history who maintain that the members of that superb college have no more occa-

sion to commemorate Henry the Eighth with gratitude than the traveller has cause to extol the beneficence of the chief of banditti who, after falling upon him in the desert and stripping him of the bulk of his worldly wealth, graciously bestows upon him a pair of leggings, a handful of cheap coin, and enough provisions to support him during the remainder of his journey.

In times prior to the fifteenth century, like angels' visits, the occasions when English sovereigns deigned to accept the hospitality of Oxonian scholars were few and far between; and when they brought their pomp within the bounds of Alma Mater, they more often came to curse than to bless,—to frown than to smile.

The revival of letters and the subsequent religious agitations, however, rendered the Oxonians of the fifteenth century such foremost objects of interest to the Crown, that Alma Mater had more grounds for dreading a renewal of royal courtesies than for deploring the infrequency of royal visits. A brief personal acquaintance with sovereigns was enough to make her wish that they would leave her alone, and to teach her that their neglect might be more convenient and beneficial than their notice.

Educated to take an intelligent interest in scholarly affairs, and to regard no less curiously than sympathetically the intellectual movements of his

time, Henry the Eighth was still the tall, slight, handsome stripling,—whose bright complexion and clear-eyed comeliness are preserved in the portraitures of painters and writers,—when, at the opening of his revolutionary and turbulent reign, he paid Oxford the visit which Antony Wood commemorates thus briefly: 'This year the King with divers nobles came to Oxford, for whose reception an Act was purposely appointed. After which was done, much redounding to the credit of the university, several of the said nobles had, as I conceive, degrees conferred upon them, and so they departed. "*After which another pest broke forth, which caused a dispersion of the clerks.*"'

From the concluding sentence of which paragraph the hasty reader of 'The Annals' might infer that the chronicler abhorred the recollection of the young monarch's first visit to the seat of learning,—an inference that would, however, be most unjust to the historian who was a loyal creature and no humorist. Oxford in olden time, like all mediæval towns of any magnitude, was never free from typhoid fever and other maladies, arising from insufficient drainage and filthy domestic usages; and scarcely a decade passed but that the city's chronic condition of disease experienced one of those terrifying and destructive exacerbations which the mediæval wiseacres of the period designated, almost

without discrimination, 'black sickness,' 'plague,' 'pest.' In coupling together in the same sentence two such incongruous affairs as an academic festival and an outbreak of putrid fever, Antony did not mean to imply that, so far as Alma Mater was concerned, a royal visit and a visitation of pestilence were things of the same nature.

Having thus smiled on learning and its followers at the opening of his reign, Henry, eight years later —when he was still in his twenty-eighth year, though his wife was fast approaching middle age— permitted his Queen and Cardinal Wolsey to visit the university, and gladden the scholars with assurances of his princely concern for their welfare. Retaining more of youthful beauty than most ladies are allowed to preserve in the thirty-sixth year of life, Catharine was a gentlewoman whose presence accorded with her regal dignity when she came over from Abingdon Abbey, the temporary seat of her husband's court, and rendered her devotions to heaven, in the inspiring presence of those relics of St. Frideswide, which, some forty years later, were commingled with the remains of Peter Martyr's Protestant wife.

Great were the rejoicings of the learned community when Catharine of Aragon, attended by the great cardinal, preceded by heralds, and surrounded by a gorgeous retinue of courtiers and men-at-arms,

entered the university by the Abingdon road, and, after replying to the enthusiastic addresses and acclamations of students and citizens, retired to prayer in St. Frideswide's Monastery, whence, after reverential service at the sacred shrine, she proceeded to Merton College—the house that in the following century became Henrietta Maria's palace, and afforded entertainment to another Catharine, Queen of England, whose conjugal wrongs were scarcely less outrageous, and whose wifely sufferings were scarcely less acute, than those which broke Catharine of Aragon's heart. 'She vouchsafed to condescend so low as to dine with the Mertonians,' says the Mertonian chronicler, in that tone of servile abasement which Oxonian scribes even so late as the present century thought it decent to adopt when speaking to or about royal dignitaries. After which repast she went the round of the academic sights, before she returned to Abingdon, little imagining that the time was not far distant in the future when a court of Oxonian sages would be called upon to decide whether she was her husband's wife or mistress, and when the university, that had just been extolling her as a virtuous lady and incomparable Queen, would declare that her marriage was incestuous, and that far from being England's Queen she was less honourable than any simple yeoman's stainless wife.

In no degree less admirable, and far more vene-

rable to Oxonian scholars, by reason of the holiness of his ecclesiastical degree, than the Queen's Highness was the great Cardinal, then in the plenitude of his power and dignity,—the man who had raised himself from a humble condition to more than one of the highest offices in Church and State, and to such influence with his sovereign that he was in fame and fact the *alter rex* of the realm. No person was ever more highly qualified by nature to play a lordly part on the world's stage than this consummate and imperious prince of a proud hierarchy; and when he declared his readiness to serve the Oxonians in all ways worthy of his greatness, the magnates of the university rendered him the homage due to his intellectual supremacy no less than to his social influence and distinctions. The oration which he delivered to the scholars in their House of Convocation had such an effect upon its hearers that after due consideration they delivered into his hands their statutes and privileges, in order that he should reform and dispose of them to their advantage,—a confidence in his wisdom and disinterested devotion to the interests of learning, that, to his honour be it remembered, he nobly justified by action, for which he deserves to be commemorated, with the title and homage wrongly bestowed on King Alfred, as the Restorer of Oxford.

When Henry the Eighth paid his next memo-

rable visit to Oxford, the events of several years, fraught with perils to the clergy and agitations to every order of the commonwealth, had wrought a great change in the sentiments cherished by the university for the sovereign. Time also had effected a no less noticeable alteration in the monarch's personal appearance, than domestic trouble and public contention had wrought in his temper. No longer a lithe, graceful stripling, he had acquired much of the breadth of shoulder and chest, the weight of limb, and butcherlike massiveness of stature and bodily style, for which he was conspicuous in his later years. The delicate lineaments of his youthful countenance, which was wont to win beholders by the light of gracious smiles, had been exchanged for the stolid firmness and bovine fulness of a visage, which was more powerful to influence spectators by looks of indignation and contempt than by expressions of complacency. But neither in his aspect nor his manner was there the slightest sign of the weakness engendered by sensual passion and indulgence. Whatever the truth of the rumours which accused him of vile prostration to degrading appetites, the clearness of his eye and the brightness of his ruddy complexion the visible firmness of his muscle and the decisiveness of his masculine intonations, demonstrated that luxurious habits and enervating pleasures had neither shaken his nerve nor impaired

the energies of an unusually vigorous constitution. Richly endowed with the learning of the age he was not afraid to exhibit his erudition to the critical doctors of the schools. Strongly fashioned, and bearing in his face and figure the ensigns of natural dignity, it was admitted even by his adversaries that in his outward characteristics he was an exemplar of princely stateliness.

Wolsey had fallen from power and descended to the grave. The Oxonian divines, yielding reluctantly to alternate menaces and allurements, had declared against the legality of Catharine's marriage. The Pope had been defied, and events were rapidly progressing to the revolution, which abolished the Papal authority from England and constituted Henry the pope of his own realm, when, on the eve of his divorce of Queen Catharine, the superb despot appeared at Oxford to speak complacent words to those doctors who had sided enthusiastically with him on the question of his marriage, and to give his academic enemies an opportunity of reading in his countenance that, whatever other virtues he might lack, resoluteness was not a quality in which he was deficient,—that he was no man to quail before sacerdotal arrogance, or sink beneath superstitious fears. He was entertained in the hall of the college, of which he was the despoiler rather than the founder; and one can imagine how profoundly his presence,

carriage, voice, impressed the least obsequious and most sagacious of the multitude of dons and students who were allowed to see and hear their daring and terrible king.

When Henry had gone to the undiscovered country, after completing a work and part in history, concerning which Englishmen will probably never be altogether of one mind, though our posterity will unquestionably render a considerable share of just admiration to the motives and achievements of the sovereign—his widow, Catharine Parr, was entertained, July 15th, 1548, with splendid hospitality by the president and scholars of Magdalen College; on the morrow of which royal reception, the members of the same house entertained the Countess of Warwick, who requited her entertainers with thanks and a gift of money recorded in the annals of the society.

To pass from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, from the day when Henry stood in Christ Church Hall and inspired with salutary awe the students who filled the noble chamber, to the day when the Prince-Regent feasted in the same historic room, and won by post-prandial eloquence the enthusiastic plaudits of a noisy gathering of aristocratic dignitaries, hilarious gownsmen, and academic sycophants, is to place the noble and the ignoble in suggestive proximity, and to institute a comparison

scarcely less insulting to the Tudor than humiliating to the Hanoverian. The man, who provoked the contest out of which Henry came victorious, who, foreseeing all the dangers and perplexities to which that contest would give birth, had no misgiving of his ability to cope with them, and who demonstrated his sufficiency for the arduous crisis of many conflicts by imperial resoluteness, was the veritable king of the men committed to his sceptre. Born in a hut, and of lowly parents, he would have forced his way to greatness. Born of regal stock, and educated to discharge princely functions, he became the very character which accident and social circumstances would have required him to feign to be, had he been qualified by nature to play no grander part than that of crowned puppet. When the most has been made of his failings and misdeeds, it must be conceded that the Tudor was worthy to be the king of a great nation. On the contrary, when the most has been made of his agreeable accomplishments and few pleasant qualities,—his powers of mimicry and anecdotical narration, his readiness in turning complimentary phrases and occasional quickness at repartee, his taste in the arts of the tailor, hairdresser, and jeweller, and his almost invariable amiability to his domestics and personal attendants —the frivolous voluptuary, who, before his accession to the kingly title, ruled England during George the

Third's withdrawal from public life, was at best a mere dissipated fop and master of ceremonies, whom Fortune, in her wildest and most malicious mood, thrust into the regal office and clothed with royal state, in order that he should be an official satire on monarchy.

From that early date of the seventeenth century, when their university became the nursery of Anglican High Churchmen, whose aim was to exalt the ecclesiastical order by cordially supporting the pretensions of the crown and glorifying the sovereign, who was at the same time the chief of the state and the supreme governor of the church, down to the days of Eldonian toryism, the majority of Oxonians had remained firmly attached to those principles of government which England and her allies against Napoleon asserted triumphantly — so far as it was possible to assert them in the nineteenth century. Even under the ascendancy of the Puritans in the seventeenth century, Oxford, whilst conforming to the requirements and adopting the peculiarities of the dominant party, never ceased to plot and pray for the revival of the theocratic and aristocratic institutions which the revolution had for the moment put in abeyance; and to her influence it was largely due that the royal house and kingly office were restored in 1660, together with episcopacy and the privileges of an hereditary nobility. Her

defection from James the Second was due to no sincere relinquishment of her politico-religious principles, but to alarm for her privileges and property which the sovereign's violent and unconstitutional measures threatened with destruction. The eighteenth century saw her overflowing with animosity against and treasonable disaffection to the House of Hanover; but, even in the days when every rumour of a Jacobite rising quickened her pulses with a thrill of gladness, and no student could distinguish himself by enthusiasm for the reigning dynasty without incurring the resentment of the majority of his academic superiors, she prided herself on her devotion to the Established Church, and her loyalty to the only king who had a just claim to her fealty. And when, after the utter extinction of the Stuart pretensions, she transferred her loyalty from the last representatives of the completely ruined and long-exiled house to the royal line that had established, in her opinion, its right to the English throne by continuous occupancy, she became the chief fosterer of the national sentiment that glorified George the Third as a marvel of wisdom, piety, and patriotism.

The last grand battle between the French Imperialists and the European legitimists — the battle which George the Fourth, in his later days, believed himself to have won by his own military skill, assisted by the subordinate co-operation of Wellington

— was still to be fought. But the Corsican usurper was in Elba, and the peace-needing populations of Europe were congratulating themselves on having done with the exhausting excitements and ruinous glories of war for at least another thirty years, when England entertained her allies in arms with splendid festivity.

At this time of general rejoicing it appeared to the Prince Regent's advisers that, in discharging the functions of national hospitality to our allies, the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, he could not provide his guests with more fitting diversion than such amusement as might be derived from a visit to Oxford.

Acting upon his advisers' suggestions, the Right Royal Master of Ceremonies signified to the Chancellor and chief dignitaries of the university, that he and his majestic visitors would honour Oxford with their effulgent presence, and that, during his sojourn within Alma Mater's bounds, he would take up his abode in the royally founded college of Christ Church. His royal highness yet further intimated his pleasure that the Emperor of Russia should be entertained in Merton College, which preserves amongst its choicest treasures a memorial of the imperial visit in the form and substance of a superb vase of Siberian marble, which Alexander presented to the Mertonians, in acknowledgment of their hos-

pitable courtesies. Whilst the Czar of the Russias was provided with quarters in Merton, the King of Prussia found suitable quarters in Corpus Christi College.

The particulars of this royal visit—which brought to Oxford, in June 1814, a crowd of peers and fashionable celebrities, in addition to the strong staff of grandly entitled personages in official attendance upon the principal guests — were recorded for the benefit of after ages, in what appeared to the academic taste of the period to be dignified and appropriate language, by the producers of a certain quarto publication, entitled 'An Account of the Visit of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent and their Imperial and Royal Majesties the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia to the University of Oxford, in June 1814.' Since it was authoritatively edited by the rulers of the university, which it delights me to honour, I have no inclination to speak with excessive asperity of this extraordinary and astounding contribution to the annals of Alma Mater. Its paper, type, and binding, are beyond praise. I look at no one of its pages without marvelling at the sumptuous liberality of its margins; and no one can deny that it accomplishes its main object in giving the reader a sufficiently vivid and minute picture of the main incidents of the celebration. Centuries hence the book will be an interesting memorial of the

ancient ways of the university, and of the servile delight which the scholars and gentlemen of the nineteenth century could evince in bespattering royalty with grotesque adulation. But when I say this in behalf of the volume, am I wrong in adding that I regret, at least with regard to one particular, being able to say so much?

I will render no keeper of the archives or registrar of the university the cruel compliment of supposing that he was the sole and unassisted author of this marvellous record. Indeed, it is not credible that any single Englishman, however prone to sycophancy and steeped in flunkeyism, sitting alone over a writing-desk and quire of paper, could have produced the memoir, that might almost be regarded as a deliberate and extravagant satire on the worst tendencies of scholastic toadies. The thing must have been the work of a committee of academic rank-worshippers, each of whom was bent on surpassing his comrades in the art of adulation.

When Professor Huber ridiculed the flowery rhetoric of the Oxford orator, who addressed Charles the First as 'Most divine king,' and expatiated on the resplendence of his royal countenance, he could not have read the official account of the Prince Regent's visit to the university; for by the light of that record the German writer would have seen

that the Caroline enthusiast's 'flummery' was no 'mere bad habit,' that distinguished peculiarly the scholars of the seventeenth century.

When the producers of this record express their wonder at the humility which enabled the Prince Regent to 'condescend' to eat a luxurious dinner, and at the inexpressible lowliness of spirit with which he 'condescended to put on the robes of D. C. L.,' the reader is tempted to ask what would become of royal personages if they never condescended to take food, and to inquire why a prince is to be regarded as descending from royalty's sublime estate when he superadds to the ordinary garb of an English gentleman the peculiar dress of a learned and highly-honoured scholar. Did the 'greatest gentleman of Europe' daily perpetrate an act of princely condescension in covering his nakedness with clothes, out of deference to the prejudices of society? If not, where was his condescension in assuming a dress which none but highly-cultivated men are ever invited to wear, unless they are princes of the earth? By their language the academic historians seem to declare an impression that, save in moments of unusual urbanity, royal personages never deign to make use of bodily raiment.

The reception of the royal visitors was fortunately in better taste than the work which commemorates it. There was a grand procession of

academic notabilities, who assembled at Magdalen College and advanced to welcome the prince on his entrance of the city; and when the royal carriages passed up the High Street they moved between two rows of gownsmen, who had 'ranged themselves at half-past ten in the morning of Tuesday the fourteenth instant, on each side of the High Street, in lines extending from St. Mary's Church to the further extremity of Magdalen Bridge, the seniors being nearest to the bridge, so as to leave the centre of the street open for the procession, and the foot-pavement for the accommodation of spectators, between whom and each line of gownsmen cavalry were stationed,' to keep the way clear.

After the illustrious guests had refreshed themselves from the fatigue of travel, and inspected some of the principal sights of the university, they were entertained with a banquet in the Radcliffe Library, at 7 P.M., when they actually condescended to eat and drink like ordinary mortals, and, after the wont of well-bred guests, to appear satisfied with the arrangements of their entertainers. 'The dessert was then served,' say the official chroniclers, 'and throughout the evening all the august personages were pleased to show the utmost affability and condescension on all occasions. His royal highness, in particular, condescended more than once to express his approbation of the arrangements.' On

leaving this scene of their condescension, at 10.30 P.M., the visitors found that the city had been brilliantly illuminated in their honour, 'many of the public buildings, the front of every college, and St. Mary's Church, as well as private houses, being brilliantly lighted up.'

On the following day, Wednesday, June 15, the Encænia drew a brilliant throng to the Sheldonian Theatre, which presented much the same appearance that it has annually presented on days of commemoration, ever since its erection in Charles the Second's reign; though, of course, exceptional pains and expense had been lavished on its decoration, for the reception of the sovereigns. The ladies' gallery was crowded with lovely women, with one of whom it was the writer's privilege to converse some years since, whilst she walked to and fro in a country garden, supporting herself with a stick, taking snuff freely and shamelessly, and deploring how much English society had deteriorated since George the Third's most gentlemanly heir presided over the morals of Mayfair. The undergraduates occupied their densely-crowded loft in full force, and cheered till they were hoarse, when the Prince Regent, after walking on crimson cloth from the Divinity School to the Theatre, condescended to ascend the daïs provided for the proper elevation of royalty. 'A platform,' say the obsequious narrators, 'covered

with the same' (*i. e.* crimson cloth), 'the back of which was hung with crimson velvet, was raised in the centre of the rising semicircle, upon which three chairs, superbly fitted up with crimson velvet, gilded plumes, and other ornaments, were placed. His royal highness the Prince Regent took the central chair, the Emperor of Russia that on his royal highness's right hand, and the King of Prussia that on his left. Their imperial and royal majesties, on this occasion, condescended to honour the university, as his royal highness the Prince Regent had already done, by appearing in the robes recently conferred upon them by diploma.'

That the glorification of royalty might lack no touch of absurdity, which the social satirist of wise men's weaknesses would wish to remark in it, the Reverend W. Crowe, LL.B., the university orator, crowed grandly about the royal Alfred, who was alike memorable as the founder of Oxford and the progenitor of the Princeps Augustissimus, whom the orator had the honour to address in the following style:—'At non ii sumus profecto, qui nosmetipsos honore tali dignamur: neque tam arroganter quicquam a me dictum aut conceptum esse velim: cum autem mente repeto tot viros præstantissimos, qui omni genere scientiarum hic floruerunt, tot Principes et Reges collegiorum nostrorum aut fundatores aut ipsos disciplinis nostris instructos, ante omnes vero

magnum illum Alfredum, a quo, Tu, Princeps Augustissime, genus ducis tuum, cujusque sceptri hæres Tu es amplissimus, Alfredum illum, quem conditorem Academiæ nostræ vindicamus, tum vero de dignitate ejus dissimulare non licet. Enim Ipse, si nunc adesset, jure optimo posset de Academiâ gloriari suâ, quapropter, oro, liceat mihi vicem ejus sustinere paulisper, dum voces proferam in personâ graviori, et digna quam vos, Augustissimi Reges, attente audiatis. Eum igitur putatote vobiscum sic loqui.'

After the orator had thus disburthened his full soul of all his melody came the recitations of the Greek, Latin, and English verses, composed by students in honour of the occasion; the author and utterer of one of which compositions — Mr. Bosanquet, gentleman-commoner of Christ Church — followed up the orator's honourable mention of King Alfred in this fashion :—

'But not since first our Alfred's star appeared,
And through the mists its morning splendour reared,
Has ever yet on Isis' favoured stream,
Yon flaming orb diffused so bright a beam.
For now to thee, great Prince, her vows sincere,
Thy Oxford pays, and bids thee welcome here,
Long may'st thou live on peaceful arts to smile,
And long a Brunswick rule fair Albion's Isle.'

The proceedings in the Theatre were followed by

a mid-day banquet at All Souls; after which repast the Emperor of Russia, his sister the Grand Duchess Catherine, and the King of Prussia bade the university farewell, and proceeded to Blenheim; whilst the Prince Regent remained in Oxford, to smile on learning and the peaceful arts for another four-and-twenty hours.

'The dinner' of that day was the feast served in Christ Hall, at which the Prince Regent, the Duke of York, Prince Metternich, and Blucher were present. During this entertainment the Regent added so largely to his previous courtesies that the measure of his condescensions may be fairly said to have flowed over. Condescension had by this time become so easy and natural to 'the greatest gentleman in Europe,' that he even went so low as to order the dean to make him forthwith a member of the college. 'After dinner,' we are assured by the committee of recorders, 'his royal highness the Prince Regent ordered the college-book to be brought; and the dean, by his royal highness's command, inserted his royal highness's name in the list of the members of the college. The dean then announced to the society the high honour conferred upon them; and Prince Blucher took that opportunity of addressing his royal highness in the German language, expressing in the strongest terms his admiration of the university and its

institutions, as well as of the general character and conduct of the British nation.'

The men of Christ Church were, of course, delighted to see the gallant soldier upon his legs; and, rightly inferring from his gesticulations and tones of voice that he was doing the civil thing in post-prandial eloquence, they cheered him vociferously. But the enthusiastic acclamations were uttered so absurdly at the wrong moments, when the speaker was saying nothing to justify rapturous interruption; and such significant silence followed his best points, that it was manifest to the few hearers who understood German, that most of the listeners had not the vaguest notion of the meaning of the words uttered by the Teutonic warrior. In fact there was scarcely a Christ Church man in the hall, with the exception of the newest member of the college, who could speak the words of the orator's mother-tongue. Apprehending the state of the case, and nothing loth to display his familiarity with a foreign language to his fellow-collegians, the Prince Regent, on Blucher's resumption of his seat, interpreted the speech to its learned auditors.

'This speech,' say the writers of the record, 'His Royal Highness most graciously condescended to interpret to the company; omitting only those

personal expressions ot respect and admiration which the Field Marshal had addressed to himself.' That the interpreter forbore to give an English rendering of the after-dinner compliments lavished upon himself may appear to some persons a matter of course scarcely deserving comment or notice; but Dr. Ingram was of another opinion. Improving on the terms in which the official narrators mention the trivial fact, the worthy doctor,—I don't like to laugh at him, for his 'Memorials of Oxford' is a capital book,—cannot refrain from an outburst of admiration at the exquisite good taste displayed by the prince. 'The room,' says Dr. Ingram, 'was filled with men of rank and eminence; but, among them all, attention was particularly directed to the veteran Blucher, who, sensible of the feeling, rose and addressed the company in his native German; which was *immediately and eloquently* translated into English by the Prince Regent, omitting only (*with that exquisite good taste which distinguished him*) those parts which were complimentary to himself.'

Having failed to give adequate utterance to their gratitude for his smiles, whilst the smiler was their guest, the Oxonians seized an early opportunity to assure the Prince Regent, through a deputation who waited upon him at Carlton House, of 'their grateful

and everlasting sense of the consideration which His Royal Highness had given them in the eyes of foreign nations as well as of the British Empire by his recent visit to the university.'

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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